Beyond the Public Sphere:
The Secret Agency of the Many

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Abstract:

This project seeks to reimagine human agency at scale. It does so first by destabilizing ideas of collectivity such as the “crowd,” “multitude”, and “proletariat,” and second, through exploring a new understanding of collective agency, one which is diffuse and pervasive. The first chapter charts the emergence of a vast, empirical non-identical Many within the last three decades of 18th-century Germany. During this time, the social structures of estate society were almost entirely eroded, but, critically, they were not immediately replaced by the new economic order of capitalist class society. Collectively the non-identical Many had no shared identity, or even a way in which to imagine a shared commonality. Chapter Two examines the influence exerted by the present-absence of this non-identical Many on the works of Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz. Lenz famously rejected the unities of time, action and place, and his plays were known for their disorienting formal structure. I argue that with the creation of his so-called “Komödie,” Lenz organizes his plays around a new sense of the interrelatedness of all individuals, an emergent sense of the totality of society, and that the seemingly fractured and chaotic form of Lenz’s plays must therefore be read as a co-authorship of the non-identical Many, a writing of a heterogeneous influence into the structure of the play itself. In the third chapter, I examine the inaugural 1788 edition of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* as a case study of a particular form of fragmentary, experiential writing which once again is the result of perceived pressure from a non-identical Many. The editors of this journal and others like it positioned their writing as a response to a new audience, one which they are unable to describe, except in the negative, as a “nicht Gelehrten Publicum,” bending their writing to match its imagined demands. I conclude by looking forward, suggesting that the figure of the non-identical Many could be a useful lens for

understanding the rapid media changes which occurred in the early 20th century, as well as the relationship which exists between social media and the Many in our own time.

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Introduction: Beyond the Crowd, Beyond Masses, Beyond the Public Sphere

This project seeks to reimagine human agency at scale. To do so requires two reciprocal motions: first, I destabilize and decenter ideas of human collectivity, arguing that the process of conceptualization itself obfuscates the possibility of non-heterogeneous groups, groups which are bound together by no internal commonality and which have no physical presence in any one place or time. Second, I claim that connected to imagining a new kind of collectivity, it is likewise necessary to rethink what human agency can be, moving away from the direct actions of the crowd or even actions on a historical scale by larger groups such as classes, towards a diffuse and pervasive agency, an agency which, like the non-group from which it emanates, is reflected in no one act, but rather manifests itself in the responses and re-actions of others to the perceived demands of a present-absence. The tension which exists between conceptualizing groups and the kind of agency which can be ascribed to them has long been recognized. The importance of this relationship is reflected in the great care afforded to the choice of terms used to describe collectives; in the mid 20th century, Marxist scholars such as George Rudé and E.P. Thompson sought to recharacterize major social events typically ascribed to the *mob* phenomenon to actions of the *crowd*. This minor shift in terminology represented a drastic change in perspective. Traditional, serious historical accounts by the likes of Edmund Burke, as well as fictional descriptions by canonical authors such as Charles Dickens, portrayed mass-events such as the French Revolution not as the actions of a thinking collective, but rather the re-actions of a savage animal horde. Social institutions were the bulwark against the ever-present threat of the chaos of an infinite rabble

gnashing at the gates of civilized society. With the *crowd*, Thompson and Rudé imagined a different kind of collectivity, and with it, a different narrative of history. For example, in his essay “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” Thompson shows that the actions of the crowd had been rational, calculated, and the result of a collective imagination and memory stretching back hundreds of years. The crowd remembered, not only the social realities of Christian patriarchal society as it had existed, but also the philosophical ideals on which it was based. With this shift, new actors come to light. Through the figure of the thinking crowd, the agency of the poor, and in particular, women becomes visible. For it was women who were responsible for the household economy, women who understood market dynamics and what represented a fair price, and finally women who organized the collective resistance, frequently using their own pseudo-legal status as a shield against serious criminal repercussions. As Thompson humorously puts it, these women seemed blissfully unaware that they were supposed to wait over a century for their own emancipation.

And yet, despite the invaluable perspective provided by Thompson, Rudé and others like them, “the crowd,” still has a flattening effect on the people who comprise it. Thompson and Rudé and were keenly aware of this difficulty: as a small example, Thompson describes the difficulty of selecting *one* pamphlet as representative for the crowds of the Bread Riots: any given pamphlet is only ever one selected from hundreds--and these hundreds are only the surviving specimens of a category of thousands--and these thousands were typically written not by members of the crowd themselves, but rather anti-mercantilist nobility sympathetic to their cause. But despite these acknowledged short-comings, the benefit of showing the unwashed masses thinking, speaking and acting was too great to be sacrificed in the name of absolute

fidelity. The crowd may speak and act as one, but at least through “the crowd,” collectively they can be shown to have agency. Other, more recent works of collective dynamics similarly struggle against the reductive tendencies of concepts of the crowd. In *Multitudes; War and Democracy in the Age of Empire,* Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s 2004 work intended as the utopian counterpart to *Empire,* the authors set out to create a classification of collectivity which does not suffer from the failings associated with traditional terms. “Multitude,” they tell us, does not assert homogeneity and ignore difference, like “people” and “masses,” nor does it create artificial boundaries between individuals in the same way that “classes” segment societies. They insist “multitude” is inherently subversive, open and inclusive--it is like the internet in that “the various nodes remain different but are all connected in the Web, and… the external boundaries of the network are open such that new nodes and new relationships can always be added” (XV). But despite protestations to the contrary, once *the* “multitude” takes its place in binary opposition to “empire,” little evidence remains of the purported internal diversity. *Multitude* inspired and was inspired by similar works which sought to reveal a hidden “swarm intelligence” of the multitudes. Simply put, swarm intelligence, when applied to humans, argues that together, groups of people collectively and critically, *unconsciously*, can form a super-mind, something whose processing power far exceeds that of any one individual within the “swarm.” It is telling that explanations of swarm intelligence, such as the variant produced in *Multitude*, invariably rely on metaphors of the internet, computer processors, insect swarms, or the biological functioning of the human mind, as the individuals within the swarm are reduced respectively to nodes, integer circuits, drones or neurons. Collective agency has been granted superhuman abilities, but at the cost of

the internal life and character of the individual, as well as any pretense towards group diversity.

In what follows, I hold that the problem of speaking *of* or *for* "the crowd," "multitude," "swarm," etc., is fundamentally a problem of concepts. Through recognizing the agency of an acting crowd, a false singularity of purpose is imposed on the many individuals who comprise any given crowd. I believe this indicates the homogenizing nature of concepts, as explored by Theodore Adorno in *Negative Dialektik*. Adorno argues that to conceptualize is to categorize, to define through exclusion, to say *this* is not *that*. The process of creating the identity of a concept is dialectical. Internally, it demands homogeneity, a consistency of parts, so that the whole can be claimed to be self-same, identical. Identity simultaneously demands the creation of an excluded external, the stripping away of a vast non-identity, and it is against this non-identical external that the concept is defined. The problem with this mode of thought is that that which has been determined to be non-identical and therefore external to, and not belonging to the essence of the concept, is precisely that which makes the individual example unique. This is a danger with which we are all intuitively familiar. It describes the vague discomfort one feels when pressed to define concepts like freedom or morality, a discomfort which grows sharp when applied to conceptual borders like what it means to be human, or where gender divisions lie. Wherever a boundary is placed, violence is done not only to that which is excluded, but also to the internal life of that which is bounded by the concept. I argue that when this process of conceptualization is applied to human collectives, the resulting flattening is even more radical. When Thompson speaks of *the* crowd, of *its* memory, *its* morality, *its* agency, he means the people physically gathered in protest, a throng which gathered at some time, at some

place. The apparent solidity of people gathered together in protest makes for a tempting object of study, as well as a potential source of political strength. But crowds are inherently ephemeral, constantly gaining and losing members, members who individually each have different ideas as to why they have gathered and what they hope to achieve. When speaking of *the crowd*, the question therefore becomes, *which* crowd is meant, which particular configuration of people and principles, and more importantly, which cross-section of which group at which moment is going to be taken as representative? And what of those who are unable to attend, the vast hidden majority who helped facilitate this particular crowd and in whose interests this crowd attempts to speak?

Recent work on collectives have attempted to circumvent this difficulty by operating at the level of discourse. Michael Gamper's *Masse Lesen, Masse Schreiben: Eine Diskurs- und Imaginationsgeschichte der Menschenmenge 1765-1930*, published in 2007, is a work of staggering rigor and depth, one which examines the evolution of concepts of the multitudes in literature, statistics, politics, and philosophy. As such, *Masse Lesen* functions in part as a *Begriffsgeschichte*, although Gamper is quick to note that, rather than tracking a presumably stable object through time, by focusing on an entire semantic field instead of a single concept, he hopes to leave the central idea of the "Menschenmenge" as open as possible. By contrast, Patrick Eiden-Offe's 2017 *Die Poesie der Klasse; Romantischer Antikapitalismus* shows the process of self-writing during the *Vormärz* period which enabled the transformation of what was "buntscheckiger Haufen" of disparate individuals into the politically potent figure of the "Proletariat." As suggested by the title, he is interested in the "Poesie," those imaginary constructs which combined with material realities to allow for the creation of a class consciousness. Through this lens, Eiden-Offe, moves seamlessly between "literature"

and “theory,” not only in order to show the becoming of imagined homogeneity, but as a form of “Rettungshistoriografie,” that is, the attempt to rediscover the potential and possibilities of futures lost. This creates a necessary doubling of his “Romantischer Antikapitalismus” concept, which speaks of the historical creation in the early 19th century of nostalgic pasts, both as a critical tool to mark what had been lost in the transition to “modernity,” while inevitably also creating a series of alternate timelines, past and present, in the mind of the contemporary audience.

The works of Gamper and Eiden-Offe are invaluable in creating a more nuanced understanding of the history and the many faces of the many. However, I argue that what is lost in discursive approaches such as these is the possibility of group agency. The collective becomes some *thing* which is written about or in the process of being written, once again relegated to the status of passive object of history. By contrast, this dissertation highlights collective agency, while simultaneously avoiding the homogenization and violence inherent to concepts. It introduces what I refer to as a “non-identical Many,” a Many which is defined only through its *exclusion from* conceptual and social systems. As implied by the inclusion of conceptual *and* social systems, I understand this non-identical Many in two ways; first, as an empirical, heterogeneous group which had a (paradoxical as it may sound) concrete non-existence in Germany at the end of the 18th century. As the social constructs of estate society were eroded and before the mechanisms of capitalism had been instituted, an ever increasing and increasingly diverse portion of the population was displaced from their homes, employment and social situation. I argue that this empirical non-identical Many had a conceptual counterpart within popular late-Enlightenment writing forms, specifically in Enlightenment journals and theatrical works. Within these works, the non-identical Many

is not directly thematized but rather exists in the hopes, fears, and dreams of the authors and editors. I believe that the *diffuse, pervasive* agency of a non-identical Many can be seen in changes within these writing forms, changes which the authors invariably attribute to unseen forces which lie beyond their comprehension or control. I argue that these changes in writing forms therefore must be understood as a co-authorship by a non-identical Many, the result of an inexorable and inexpressible pressure exerted by an unseen but felt present/absence.

The first chapter, “The Specificity of the Premodern World,” charts the creation of a vast, *empirical* non-identical Many within the last three decades of 18th century Germany. I examine this period as a period of rupture, and in so doing, follow the premodern/modern divide established by the likes of Foucault, Koselleck, Kittsteiner and others. However, rather than using this division as a means of comparing two distinct epochs, I am interested in the moment of dissolution itself, the so-called “Sattelzeit” or transitional period. During this time, the social structures of estate society were almost entirely eroded, but, critically, they were not immediately replaced by the new economic order of capitalist class society. In order to show the void which this created, I apply the intentionally anachronistic concepts of markets, labor and property to traditional society, demonstrating that they have no point of reference within traditional society. The fungibility of time, people and place within capitalism provides a totalizing network of institutions, one which has no outside and which is capable of incorporating all individuals into *the body social*. This does not imply that all members of society are provided for within capitalism, but rather, that even (or perhaps especially) those members of society who are excluded from institutional protections within capitalism are still included in the economic calculus of society as a “potential labor reserve.” Without

this all-encompassing economic framework, and in the absence of the strict hierarchies of estate society which preceded it, an increasingly diverse and vast portion of the population was displaced beyond the limits of society. This non-group included serfs, peasant farmers, tradesmen, criminals, children, the old, the infirm, soldiers, fallen nobility, widows, ethnic minorities and many other, utterly unique cases. Collectively they had no shared identity, had no collective sense of consciousness, or even a way in which to imagine a shared commonality. In other words, together they represented a radically non-identical Many, a vast othered population, linked only through their collective exclusion.

Chapter two, “Lenz, Social Physicist,” examines the influence exerted by the present-absence of a *conceptual* non-identical Many on the works of Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz. Theater as a medium functions simultaneously as a representation of society and also as a point of contact with a diverse cross section of society, making it doubly illuminating to a study of multitudes. Within the medium of plays, Lenz’s works are of particular interest: his plays were known for both the vivid, lifelike quality of their characters, as well as their disorienting formal structure. Lenz famously rejected the classical unities of the theater. These unities, originally formulated by Aristotle and then taken up again in the 17th century by French classical theater, dictated that a play should follow a single action, over the course of a single day, at a single location. By contrast, Lenz’s *Der Hofmeister,* spans years, and the progression of this time is stuttering and irregular; days and months disappear without comment, children are conceived and then already born in the span of pages or minutes. Instead of one location, scenes bounce frenetically from city to city, city to town, and town to country, a provocative unstageability which Lenz pushed to the extreme in *Der neue Menoza*, for

which the stage directions are simply “Hie und Da.” Finally, instead of following the arc of a single action by the protagonist, the titular Hofmeister disappears for whole acts at a time, as the play busily follows a huge ensemble of characters. The reception of Lenz’s plays was predictably divisive, with some heralding him as Germany’s Shakespeare, but most dismissing his work as the tasteless, unnatural ramblings of arrogant youth. I argue that with the creation of his so-called “Komödie,” Lenz introduces a new actor and with it, a new unifying principle to his plays. Rather than a single acting individual, his plays are ordered by an emergent sense of the totality of society. Within these plays, the traditional form splinters in order to show the plight of disparate individuals, each one suffering a unique fate, but all falling victim to a new economically motivated social whole. It is a perceived negative-interrelatedness between all individuals, one which binds disparate people to the same destructive fate. The seemingly fractured and chaotic form of Lenz’s plays must therefore be read as a response to the pressure of a non-identical Many, a writing of a heterogeneous influence into the structure of the play itself.

In the third chapter, “Reaching for the Many,” I examine the inaugural 1788 edition of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* as a case study, representative of both the explosive growth of Enlightenment journals which occurred at the end of the 18th century, as well as a particular form of fragmentary, experiential writing linked to a non-identical Many. Like the theater, Enlightenment journals positioned themselves as a “popular” medium, that is, one intended for the greatest possible audience. While this goal of maximum readership is sometimes retroactively mocked as unrealistic, given the increasing, but nevertheless miniscule, reading populace at the end of the 18th century, I argue that the metric of literacy is both difficult to judge and more importantly, serves as a poor indicator of the potential influence of a publication. Reading in the late 18th

century was still very much a social activity; books, journals and letters were typically read aloud to a gathered audience, be it in a private home, a church or other public space. The authors and editors of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* were acutely aware of contemporary reading practices, and actively conformed the journalistic medium to these practices. At one point, the editors describe themselves as the cashiers of ideas, exchanging gold-bar concepts minted by the likes of Garve, Wieland and Kant into smaller denominations, coins which they hoped would find their way into the poorest houses of the nation and even eventually into the hats of beggars. In a related metaphor, the editor Joachim Campe posits the journal author as a spiritual doctor, who, like their physical counterpart, must conform to the demands of the patient, claiming provocatively that if the audience refused to read anything but "Frachtzettel," then the journal author adjust their writing accordingly. Time and again, the editors and authors of Enlightenment journals position their writing as a response to a new audience, a new public, one which they hoped would be as large and inclusive as possible. This is a public they are unable to describe, except in the negative, as a "nicht Gelehrten Publicum," an audience which neither corresponded exactly with the an empirical non-identical Many, nor with traditional reading audiences. So while the editors remain unsure to whom they write, they nevertheless come to a similar conclusion as did Lenz: this new public demands fragmentary, iterative, experiential snapshots of the here and now, the everyday, half-formed thoughts which find their completion within the minds of the public itself.

It is in this co-authorship of writing forms that the agency of a non-identical Many can first be imagined. But this is also a new understanding of what agency is and can mean. This agency cannot be understood as the singular will of a unified, internally

consistent actor known as the Crowd, Multitude, Proletariat, etc. Instead, it is the fundamental *heterogeneity*, the very *irreducibility* of the non-identical Many and the subsequent inability to conceptualize this Many as a cohesive population or group, which produces the open, fragmentary and experiential writing forms which were prevalent in popular media at the end of the 18th century. As previously stated, it is a *diffuse*, *pervasive* agency which is reflected in a new authorial awareness of the interrelation between all members of society, a new sense of totality which demands a radically new understanding of society, beyond the confines of the Gelehrten Republik or the public sphere. This is the agency of the present/absence of a non-identical Many, an agency whose social and conceptual pressure *forces* authors to forego the neat, closed symmetry of systematic, scientific works. And while the non-identical Many can be said to have existed in no time or place, its outline can be seen in the response of authors and writing forms at the end of the 18th century. I conclude the dissertation by looking forward, suggesting that the figure of the non-identical Many could be a useful lens for understanding the rapid media changes which occurred in the early 20th century, and potentially, could also deepen our understanding of the relationship which exists between social media and the Many in our own time. Now, more than ever, it is important to develop tools to recognize the agency of those individuals who find themselves outside of the borders of identity.

Chapter 1: The Specificity of the Premodern World

This chapter follows the material-historical creation of a non-identical Many at the end of the 18th century. It begins by examining influential models of modernity which posit this time as a point of rupture between modern and traditional societies, before suggesting a model of "radical transition" which examines this "Sattelzeit" itself, not as a discrete historical epoch, but rather as a period of dissolution in which old systems of social order disappeared but were not immediately replaced. It then applies the intentionally anachronistic concepts of markets, labor and property to traditional society, in order to show the ways in which the specificity of the pre-modern world defied the fungible abstraction necessary to the functioning of modern society. It ends by showing how the dislocation of a heterogeneous group from the bonds of traditional society inevitably produced a non-identical Many, a fractured group which never existed in any one place and was defined only negatively through its mutual exclusion from the emerging idea of society.

I. The late 18th Century: Theories of Rupture, Transition

For the creators of grand historical narratives, the late 18th century has long been an object of fascination, due to its position as the last moment Before. Ideas about what, exactly, this period precedes and the degree of continuity after 1800 vary, but the view of this period as an irrevocable turning point remains constant. In *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi posits the time prior to 1795 as the last moment before the inversion in which society begins to function within markets instead of markets operating within society, a transformation which simultaneously signals the "discovery" of society,

that is, the complex network of biological and economic "laws" which are believed to determine all human behavior. For E.P. Thompson, the end of the 18th century marked the end of popular resistance against the establishment of capitalism, the moment at which the dissident peasant crowds were ultimately transformed into economic classes. With this transformation, the nature of popular resistance to the capitalist class likewise changed from an extra-capitalist attack on the profit motive made on the basis of Christian-patriarchal social values to intra-capitalist labor disputes between proletariats and factory owners. Michel Foucault marked the end of the 18th century as a moment of paradigm shift and rupture in two different theories with two different organizing principles; in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* it marks the end of the classical era of representation[1] and the beginning of modern academic disciplines with their focus on humans as agents of historical change, while in *Discipline and Punish*, Jeremy Bentham's writings of the late 18th century are used to exemplify what Foucault sees as the transition from a centralized authority of physical violence towards more economical, psychic-violence directed at the individual, leading to a self-perpetuating, self-sustaining discipline inscribed within the individual's very sense of self. Reinhart Koselleck referred to the period between 1750 and 1850 as the "Sattelzeit," the moment in which the "Janusgesicht" of history first becomes clear, as it separated two distinct temporalities, namely the eschatological time of traditional society, a sense of time in which the present is non-existent, a meaningless blip crushed between resurrection and the end of days, and the modern sense of empty progressive time which serves as the basis for free will and the individual. The change in temporality

[1] And with it, grand classificatory systems which sought to represent the world as a whole, and significantly, a whole of which humans were only one component among many.

was so drastic that it destroyed mutual intelligibility across this threshold; in order to understand the meaning of words and concepts prior to the Sattelzeit, Koselleck felt compelled to invent the science of Begriffsgeschichte which recreates their original context and significance.

The differences between these theories are significant, as together they represent some of the most important innovations in intellectual history. Nevertheless, they all indicate the end of the 18th century as a time of *radical transition*, be it on a conceptual, temporal or socio-historical level. The goal of this chapter is to better understand the moment of transition itself, to trace those forces responsible, emphasize the importance of the rate of change and the lag between (apparently) stable eras, and finally to show how this period-between produced a non-identical Many, a heterogeneous group whose considerable influence will be traced through writing forms in the subsequent chapters. This argument therefore continues the tradition of conceptualizing the second half of the 18th century as a moment-in-between, rather than following the example of Reinhard Blänkner and others in asserting that instead it represents a discrete historical era, namely that of “neuständische Gesellschaft.” Blänkner argues that concepts such as “Sattelzeit” necessarily lead to a teleological understanding of history, one in which the future of the capitalist world economy and the Industrial Revolution are anachronistically written into a society which instead operated in accordance with its own laws and norms, laws which were distinct from those of both traditional estate and modern class-based society. This is an important concern, and one which demands a constant vigilance; for in presupposing the end, historical difference and possibility are subsumed into narratives of fate, nature, progress, etc. However, the argument presented in this chapter uses the idea of transition precisely in order to

preserve historical plasticity and specificity. This is transition not understood as a transition *to* a known end from the pretended omniscience of an atemporal future, but rather transition as transition *from*, an attempt to understand the then-contemporary experience of the dissolution of a real and imagined present. The lens of *transition from* emphasizes both the uniqueness of the historical moment, granting an attention to detail impossible when every event and social structure is merely read as a sign of a future to come, while also avoiding the stability which terms like “neuständische Gesellschaft” would imply. The asymptotic approach of historical specificity through the introduction of ever smaller epochs seems unavoidably to produce deterministic calcification, exchanging the perils of teleology for those of stasis. It is also for this reason that the term *radical transition* has been chosen in lieu of *rupture*: rupture by necessity establishes a dichotomy between a thing which was and a thing which now is, stabilizing both through juxtaposition. What is of interest to this work is the reaching-uncertainty presented by an unknown future, which, though ever present, attains a fever pitch during those times when people are confronted with a reality which consistently defies their expectations--to borrow terms from Heinz-Dieter Kittsteiner’s *Naturabsicht Und Unsichtbare Hand: Zur Kritik Geschichtsphilosophischen Denkens*, when the collectively held *Erfahrungsraum* has almost no correlation to the *Erwartungshorizont*. Critically, a *radical transition from* does not fully stabilize either that which precedes or that which follows, while still acknowledging the real advantages of knowing, not the ultimate goal of history, but the shape of institutions to come. It thereby aims to preserve the latent potential of imagined pasts and futures, while simultaneously employing productive anachronism to highlight historical change and difference. As detailed by Caroline Levine in *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*, examining the past is not a matter

of determining the extent of continuity or rupture, but rather reading the way in which different societal forms overlap and interact with one another, with the goal of becoming a “canny manipulator” of points of intersection. We study the past because of the dialectical tension it creates with the present; it is both distinct and alien, while remaining familiar enough that it bears direct comparison to the present, and through this comparison “the contingency of our own ordering principles [becomes apparent] when we know that they have at other times been organized otherwise” (Levine XII). It is in this spirit that this chapter applies the modern concepts of markets, time and space to the world as it existed before 1800 in order to highlight the gap which was created both conceptually and within social institutions leading to the formation of a non-identical Many--not only to demonstrate the influence of a unique historical formation, but to conjure parallels to a similar formation in the present.

II. The Disappearing World: Markets

As made evident by the works of Karl Polanyi and E.P. Thompson, the study of market behavior in the pre-modern is essential to understanding differences in societal organization, bringing the shift from subsistence to profit, bread to cash, or Christian duty to entrepreneurial spirit into sharp relief. Polanyi characterizes this “great transformation” as an inversion in which the laws of market dynamics went from the carefully circumscribed rules of a minor societal institution to the foundational organizing principle of society itself. The current ubiquity of the profit motive clouds the significance of this claim; while the concept of *homo-oeconomicus* is now a constant object of critique, the “laws” of supply and demand have been naturalized to the extent that it is difficult to imagine them as historical concepts of relatively modern origin. It is therefore useful to

begin as Thompson does in “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” by examining the legislation and customs which the “natural laws” of the market circumvented and replaced. Contrary to every modern principle of trade, traditional laws forbade the practice of “forestalling,” that is, withholding of grain or flour until market prices are favorable, and instead insisted on as direct a channel of sale as possible, thereby effectively outlawing most middlemen. Traditional laws of commerce similarly controlled the time, place and acceptable prices of sale, and it was illegal for large buyers to purchase in bulk from farmers for resale, either directly or “by sample” at markets. In other words, the profit mechanism was legally blocked in grain markets; “buying low and selling high” is impossible when the seller is unable to dictate the time, amount or place at which a commodity will be sold. What this signifies is that within traditional society, grain was *not* a commodity, that is an object produced for profit, but rather a necessary service rendered for the good of the whole. It was for this reason that “millers and… bakers were considered as servants of the community, working not for a profit but for a fair allowance” (Thompson 83). Because the primary function of local markets was the subsistence needs of the community, and because the manner in which goods could circulate was tightly controlled, the farmers, millers and bakers peddling their wares at market were more comparable to a priest than a capitalist entrepreneur. And while Thompson indicates the gradual erosion of these precepts over the course of centuries, he demonstrates that they continued both to exert legal force and to inform expectations until the very end of the 18th century.[2]

[2] Indeed, the very fact that the modern reader is likely to imagine it “natural” for a farmer, miller, baker to expect maximum return on their possessions indicates an important break with traditional society. Thompson notes that prior to the onset of capitalism, there existed an accepted difference between “natural” and “civil” liberties. Quoting a “characteristic pamphlet” of the 1760s, Thompson writes “It cannot then be said to be the liberty of a citizen, or of one who

Where Thompson describes the historically and regionally specific trade of grain and bread prior to 1800, Karl Polanyi paints with characteristically broader strokes, claiming that *all* markets, in *all* societies, had *always* been carefully regulated micro-ecosystems operating in accordance with societal norms. He chastises historians, sociologists and economists for thereby ignoring the inconvenient truth of the anti-capitalist breadth of human history, and instead focusing on an extremely narrow band of the recent past. The works of Adam Smith, though prophetic/prescriptive towards the future and offering some clarity towards the present, are a huge misrepresentation of the past (45). This is not an argument for an idyllic communistic past of "primitive man;" Polanyi is quick to assert that the past was by and large a wildly inequitable place, one with slaves and kings, serfs and lords, citizens and noncitizens and sharp gender divisions. The key difference he seeks to make is that these were *societal* divisions, and not the functioning of market forces. How much tribute was made, what gift offered to a guest, how food was rationed to servants, all operated in accordance with economies, but these were individual economies of social status and not the result of a single unified economy based on the profit motive. Polanyi argues that this was just as true for the householding economies of Europe, long indicated as proto-capitalistic, as it was for "primitive" cultures.

Which isn't to say that profit motive as such didn't exist. Polanyi divides markets into three categories, local, external and internal. Local markets, of the kind already

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lives under the protection of any community; it is rather the liberty of a savage; therefore he who avails himself thereof, deserves not that protection, the power of Society affords" (86). Part of the shift which occurred near the end of the 18th century was the gradual integration of civil society into the natural world. Humans, once believed to be of divine origin and separate from and superior to the animal kingdom, were made subject to biological determinants. The subjection of human society to laws of population and evolutionary theory and the transformation of the "natural" finds its origin in the extension of market dynamics across society, invisible laws "discovered" underneath the fabric of society, directing its course.

described by Thompson, were "limited to the goods of the region, [goods] which do *not* bear carrying because they are too heavy, bulky or perishable." Local markets were a means of redistribution within a community, or regionally between town and country, and as such do not operate in accordance with a profit motive--instead they represent a reciprocal and mutually beneficial exchange. External trade operates sympathetically with local trade, supplying those goods not available locally, acting in concert with other communities--in other words, historically external trade is also a system based on the principle of redistribution rather than profit. Polanyi is therefore able to argue that it is only with the establishment of *internal* markets, that is, markets geared towards local or national competition, as opposed to redistribution, that capitalism can be said to emerge. Furthermore, he argues that internal markets were only created through the direct intervention of the newly emerging national states, and were *not* an inevitable consequence of the expansionary impulses of truck and barter, nor of external trade.

Polanyi's ultimate argument is that the creation of internal competitive markets was only achieved through the direct intervention of the state, and that it was this, in a sense, "unnatural" interference which caused the inversion of society to operate in accordance with market laws of profit. This assertion is unconvincing and undermines much of his own theory as previously detailed. Polanyi correctly asserts that the creation of colonies and the European "discovery" of the New World directly contributed to this inversion,[3] however, in his haste to assert the *artificiality* of the dominance of market laws over society, he is forced to assert that external trade, though distinct from local trade, is not inherently competitive or expansionary, that, like internal trade, it is merely a

[3] The connection between the "primitive accumulation" which occurred in colonies and the establishment of capitalist system in the home nation had already been well documented by Karl Marx in *Capital: Volume I*, as will be explored below.

system of redistribution, a collaborative exchange between communities. And yet, Polanyi also states that “External trade is, originally, more in the nature of adventure, exploration, hunting, piracy and war than of barter” (62). His intent in describing external trade as “piracy” is to distinguish it from the profit dynamic, but in doing so he inadvertently exposes the limitless, expansionary character of external trade. Local trade is a system of distribution geared towards communal subsistence and, to employ a modern economic concept, represents inelastic demands. While increases in production or availability can result in greater consumption, this increase is to a certain extent bounded; birth and death rates can increase/decrease to be sure, but the amount of grain required by a specific individual remains relatively constant. By comparison, just as the pre-industrial markets for wool seemed to be without limit, there is no point of saturation for pillage, since, like profit, the fundamental motivating force behind pillage is not utility. Polanyi claims that Aristotle presaged market economy by 2000 years by “denouncing the principle of production for gain as boundless and limitless… Aristotle was, in effect, aiming at the crucial point, namely the divorce of the economic motive from all concrete social relationships which would by their very nature set a limit to that motive” (57). Polanyi also indicates external markets as the point of origin at which production demands exceeded the bounds of the guild system, leading to the establishment of wage labor:

> On the local market, production was regulated according to the needs of the producers, thus restricting production to a remunerative level. This principle would naturally not apply to exports, where the interests of the producers set no limits to production. Consequently, while local trade was strictly regulated, production for export was only formally controlled by corporations of crafts. The

> dominating export industry of the age, the cloth trade, was actually organized on the capitalistic basis of wage labor. (68)

Here, by his own admission, we see a capitalistic, expansionary dynamic at play, as early as the 16th century, and occurring precisely as the result of external trade. There are, of course, saturation points to both external trade for profit and the direct pillaging of foreign cultures (and reaching these saturation points results in cataclysmic collapse), but it takes a long time to clothe the world in wool or to remove the last scrap of gold from the Aztec empire, giving the moment to moment operation of external trade a fundamentally different character than that of local trade.

The reason Polanyi argues at cross purposes with himself against external trade as being inherently expansionary, is to underline the artificiality of organizing society in accordance with market principles. If the supremacy of the laws of the market over society is the result of state (i.e., human) intervention and not the product of a natural, progressive, evolutionary process occurring within society, market laws are robbed of their fated legitimacy. If artificial, market laws can no longer be posited as a cosmic order operating in accordance with a divine wisdom which escapes our limited, mortal reason. Instead, the brutal, exploitation of the profit mechanic is revealed, and its origin can be traced back to intentional manipulation of social structures. This is an important intervention, and one which creates a huge amount of space in which to imagine the constructedness of the world. However, it is possible to maintain that the subversion of society to economic laws was not an inevitable and in this sense, natural occurrence, while also recognizing that external trade had always been marked by certain expansionary, unrestricted dynamics--in fact to do so logically strengthens Polanyi's assertion that societies had for millennia consciously, carefully guarded themselves

against the real dangers of profit-based production. Like Thompson, one of Polanyi's chief concerns is to show that despite the expansion of markets under mercantilism, Europe remained fundamentally un-capitalist until the late 18th century, and that people did not understand or operate in accordance with the new "laws" until the 1830s.

The paradox of 200 years of increasing market presence without a corresponding adoption of capitalist mentality or significant leakage of capitalist institutions into society at large can be understood through the proposed double function of the towns and cities which housed external markets. The walls of these mercantile centers were designed both to protect the town inhabitants and markets from outside incursion, as well as *contain* the market dynamics housed within. Cities and towns, acting in coordination with the guilds, maintained a vice-like grip over who produced what, in what amount, and at which price. Even within the cities, local and external markets were typically separated, because not only was the limitless nature of external trade understood, so too was its tendency towards monopolization (63, 69). Something which is often misunderstood by modern analyses of traditional European society is that the primary function of guilds was the protection of its members, not production. Through the careful control of membership and production, the needs of the guild (and secondarily, the community) were met, but not exceeded. This system is geared towards guild maintenance, and not expansion through the generation of profit on the basis of supply and demand. Supply and demand themselves, barring (frequent) unforeseen calamities, were held in balance through careful regulation. To invert this structure and place society at the whim of the markets was a madness of which even in *Wealth of Nations*, originally published in 1776, Adam Smith could not conceive. According to Polanyi:

> There is no intimation in his [Adam Smith's] work that the economic interests of the capitalists laid down the law to society; no intimation that they were the secular spokesmen of the divine providence which governed the economic world as a separate entity. The economic sphere, with him, is not yet subject to laws of its own that provide us with a standard of good and evil. (116-117)

At this juncture it is useful to reassert some aspects of markets as they operated before the change, in order to better understand both the reality of the pre-modern, pre-industrialized, pre-capitalized world and to establish the *Erfahrungsraum* and implicit *Erwartungshorizont* as they existed in the second half of the 18th century. First, local trade was organized on the principle of need and subsistence rather than profit. This was particularly closely regulated when it came to the sale of actual foodstuffs, but it extended to all forms of exchange within a community. This does not suggest an equitable distribution of goods, as there were those closer to or further from the line of starvation and exposure (although universally higher mortality rates also kept this threshold narrower than it is today), but it does mean that trade operated in accordance with laws wholly alien to modern markets, and that the profit motive was specifically blocked through legal restrictions and prohibitions placed on those very mechanisms central to the function of capitalist economy: withholding goods for a better price, selling in bulk, buying low and selling high, etc. Second, and indicated by the first aspect, markets were socially situated and controlled, and were not themselves the organizing principle of society--and indeed, market principles such as the profit motive were viewed as antithetical to the safe functioning of society. All economies, including the local sale of foodstuffs, the operation of guilds, trade with neighboring cities, operated in accordance with social relationships and hierarchies. This has implications far beyond regulation of

the market, and requires a total reimagining of not only the operation of the markets themselves, but also the society which surrounded them. Specifically, the institutions of property and labor are transformed in the absence of market laws. Property and labor, stripped of their fictive quality as commodities, are nothing more than human activity and the context of that activity. The point here is not to argue for the falsity of the concepts of property and labor. *Within* market based economies property and labor are unquestionably real, exerting influence over the lives of all who live inside it, whether they are merely reified concepts or no. But in order to understand the liminal state which existed between the total disappearance of estate society and the creation of capitalism, it is necessary to sketch the concepts of labor and property as they existed, and to the extent with which they existed, prior to the great transformation.

III. The Disappearing World: Labor

It is almost impossible to speak of labor prior to capitalism without slipping into anachronism. The concept of labor, as understood today, depends in turn on the concept of the free worker, that is, the idea of a self-determining individual choosing to sell their time/labor as a commodity on the market to employers in exchange for money. This is the foundational assumption of capitalism, and more, the relationship between employer and employee in a free market is the source of capital itself. It is only through the act of buying labor, through the relational disparity which it creates, that “the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence” are able to valorize objects and create surplus value. The “freedom” of the worker is the precondition for the entire exchange and, as Karl Marx famously argued in *Capital: Volume I*, it is a freedom in a double sense:

> Free workers… neither form part of the means of production themselves, as would be the case with slaves, serfs, etc., nor do they own the means of production, as would be the case with self-employed peasant proprietors. The free workers are therefore free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. (Marx 874)

To take the example of the serf, in order to become a free worker capable of selling their labor in the modern sense, they must be emancipated from both the restrictive caste system which fixed them and their families in place for generations, but also "freed" from any means of subsistence, be it in the form of privately held or communal land. The precise nature of the relationship of the poorer castes to the land, and the means through which they were expropriated will be explored in the following section; in terms of labor, it is only necessary to emphasize that these conditions did not yet fully exist in the second half of the 18th century. And because they did not exist, the "labor" which occurred was of another sort entirely.

A common complaint leveled by historians at feudal economies is their relative inefficiency. When compared with market economies, feudal economies require more people and more time to produce the same amount of grain, wool, manufactured goods, etc. More than just a difference in technological innovation (better farming equipment, steam engines, mining equipment, etc.), this is the product of social organization, the relations of production. Marx states that feudal production is characterized, "by division of the soil amongst the greatest possible number of sub-feudatories" (878). This is true from the ruling aristocracy down to the lowest serf. At every level, power, land and production are divided and subdivided into ever smaller, often overlapping units. In place of consolidated large farms or centralized manufacturing centers, streamlined to produce

the most material wealth with the smallest amount of human labor possible, production was sprawling and diffuse. Instead of an ironclad division of labor, members of society frequently participated in varying kinds of work within a day, season, year, and the vast majority were at least partially responsible for the production of their own means of subsistence. The serf that tilled the land of the great lord also had rights to common, and in some cases personal, land on which they farmed and tended to livestock for their own use (though of course still subject to taxation). The weavers of the putting out system likewise sustained themselves not through paid labor alone, but provided themselves with food for their tables, wood for their fires, and the maintenance of shelter. Poor servants worked for and with poor families, living under the same roof, eating at the same table and helping to rear children, children who themselves contributed to the daily work of survival as soon as they were able. Within this structure, labor as something separate, distinct from other aspects of life, was unthinkable. Working for oneself, for one's lord, as a servant, all bled seamlessly from one into another, representing different facets of the same process, the work of life. Labor and human activity were indistinguishable.

To view the premodern through the lens of "efficiency" therefore necessarily introduces anachronism. As James Sheehan notes in *German History 1770-1866*, no one had the expectation of being happy, healthy or successful (80). People worked collectively in order to survive, a dynamic which Sheehan says produced a great fluidity between master and apprentice, servants and the families they served. Death and catastrophe pressed on social institutions from all sides. Families were particularly vulnerable, as the death of a father or mother could spell ruin and collapse, increasing interdependence between members of a household, regardless of blood relation. In *A*

Social History of Germany, Eda Sagarra similarly stresses the strict corporative, communal nature of premodern Germany, bringing the lack of strict social boundaries into even sharper relief (142). It is therefore surprising when both scholars slip unreflectively into critiques of estate society on the basis of personal, egotistical motivation. Sheehan worries about the "emotional texture and psychological climate" of these households in which servants are forced to work tirelessly for children who are not their own biological offspring, to provide for homes which they do not own, all with the knowledge that they may never acquire the means to themselves marry and establish their own households (85).[4] Sagarra in turn bemoans the inefficiency of tenant farmers, who she speculates surely suffered from a lack of motivation due to the fact they were not the direct benefactors of their own labor (143).

The contradiction is clear; on the one hand, both Sheehan and Sagarra recognize that traditional estate societies and economies functioned on the basis of corporative survival. Like Polanyi and Thompson, they see that the goal of production was subsistence and not the result of an individualistic profit motive. On the other hand, by critiquing inefficiencies on the basis of a lack of incentive, they again slide into the modern prejudices. The incentive was first and foremost survival, of the collective and the individual. To suggest that servants were less motivated to tend to children who were

[4] As a partial proof to the misery and disenfranchisement of those in question, Sheehan turns to one of history's most prolific complainers, the titular main character of Karl Philipp Moritz's *Anton Reiser*. It is not the fictional nature of the account itself which is problematic, but rather, that *Anton Reiser* is a poor bellwether as it portrays a society already in flux. Anton Reiser's misery is precisely the product of his position on the fringes of society. He is an educated youth from a poor family, a new and at the time extremely rare phenomenon. He is not an apprentice to a trade, a member of the clergy, and has no connection to agrarian social networks. Anton has heard the clarion call of the Enlightenment for emancipation and individual worth, but finds himself unable to realize their potential, while also standing outside of traditional society. As such, Anton Reiser is indeed archetypal for a specific time and a particular kind of suffering; not of miseries and dissatisfactions inherent to estate society, but rather of those born of the ever more frequent experience of having no place in society.

not their own, or that that tenant farmers were only motivated by self-gain and therefore disinclined to work for their lords, incorrectly subverts the social to the economic. As demonstrated by Polanyi, the collective-oriented actions of individuals in non-capitalistic societies are not due to the absence of selfish motivations, but rather because acting against the precepts of the community meant expulsion and almost certain death (49). Sheehan himself states that “In the traditional social order, communal power was affirmed at every stage in the life of an individual and his family. Birth, marriage and death were all marked by public rituals that brought people together to express their dependence upon one another” (85). This is the source of the fluidity which existed within household economies. The inhabitants of the “traditional social order” fundamentally understood that each depended on all, and were daily confronted with the fatal realities against which social institutions were the only bulwark.

It is insufficient to say that the economic was submerged in the social. In reality, there existed only social economies. A king was not king because he was rich, but rather rich because he was king. To be a king is to be divinely appointed, or phrased secularly, to be marked by social institutions as being divinely appointed. Conversely, a serf is not a serf because they work in the service of their lord, collecting grain, raising livestock. It is not the activity which determines the social status, but rather social status which determines activity. A serf is a serf because of social, hierarchical structures which have enveloped their family for generation after generation. In other words, an individual’s place in society was neither coterminous with, nor determined by, their position within the production process, but rather social status dictated position within production. This is also what accounts for the famous rigidity of traditional estate society: a serf can collect as much grain as they want, they are not going to better their social standing. To

use an example even closer to and, for this reason, more alien from our modern understanding; to advance from apprentice to journeyman to master was not exclusively or even primarily a function of production, i.e. number of pigs butchered, hides tanned, pieces of furniture built. This is because, again, production itself was socially determined and not a function of market derived supply and demand. What was to be produced, how, how many, and by whom, were all decisions of the guild leadership, whose ultimate goal was the preservation and longevity of the guild itself. As a result, the internal regulation of the guild was focused on stability and not expansion, profit margins, or "efficiency" in the modern sense, stability which was to be achieved through maintaining consistent numbers of members and level of production. Membership was a function of familial heritage and social position. While it was possible for the children of members of one guild to apply for another guild, it was infinitely more difficult for someone external to the community to gain admittance, a process which was a function of both much higher fees and more prohibitively, the acceptance of the guild leadership, with the fees representing more the reluctance of guilds to accept outsiders at any price more than it did a commodity for sale. Advancement within the guild depended both on years of service and the approval of guild leadership.

To accuse guilds, or estate society as a whole, of inefficiency is therefore to misunderstand the intended purpose of these institutions, namely the self-preservation of the institutions themselves and those who belonged to them. Once systems of production were placed under the control of market dynamics, they unquestionably became more "efficient" in the sense that both absolute as well as per capita production increased: more produced, by fewer people, in less time. However, this efficiency in terms of material production came at a steep cost: instead of gearing production to the

needs of the community served and producing organization, the stability and security of production vanished. With the loosening of regulation, anyone could and did produce, and in whatever quantity, limited only by raw materials, availability of “free labor” and market demand. By removing or circumventing the social organization of production, the “natural laws” of competitive markets are unleashed. Production becomes solely a function of supply and demand and profit margins, introducing dynamics such as over and under production, fluctuating prices, boom and bust cycles. New concepts and social realities creep into society such as “employment,” “unemployment,” and the even more perplexing “underemployment.” Just as “labor” within traditional society is a term without a clear referent (beyond indicating human activity as such, the labor of life), “employment” cannot be applied to estate society. An individual was not employed or unemployed. One was either within the protective mesh of society or stood outside of it. A craftsman or serf, worked when work was allocated to them, and ate the food which either they themselves provided or which their station guaranteed. The individual was still often exposed to the vicissitudes of nature in the form of drought, famine, plague, but social institutions functioned to offer protection to those who belonged to them wherever possible.

As will become more apparent in the following discussion of land, all *members of society* had rights to the means of subsistence. Even in those relatively rare instances in which people earned wages in traditional society, these wages still had a different character than those of wage labor. First, in the case of guilds, they were again determined socially and not by market forces (Polanyi 73). Second, in the case of putting-out systems, typical for wool production and limited selection of other trades, in which the rate of compensation was partially based on what would today be described

as market forces, these wages formed only one part of household income, and were not the sole source of subsistence. This is a critical distinction, because as Marx noted, the modern concept of wage-labor can only function in isolation and without alternative: “So long… as the worker can accumulate for himself… capitalist accumulation and the capitalist mode of production are impossible” (933). As a demonstration of this truth, Marx, with his usual acerbic wit, points to the colonies in which the workers have been known to be so “simple” and “mischievous” as to exploit the capitalist instead of vice-versa, abandoning their job the moment compensation had been received (937). Wage labor requires the existential pressure of starvation to function, and without it, workers simply refuse to work for a wage, demand “unfair” (i.e., fair, non-value generating) compensation for their labor, and “today’s wage-labourer is tomorrow’s independent peasant or artisan,” working once again for themselves and for their own gain (936). What this demonstrates is that even once the “laws” of the market have been established, they are not automatically universal, but rather must be extended at great effort and cost.[5] It is therefore necessary to destroy all alternative means of subsistence

[5] A latourian idea of networks is useful to understand what is meant here by the effort involved in creating, maintaining and expanding the “natural laws” of the market. In his essay “On the Partial Existence of Existing and Nonexisting Objects,” Bruno Latour shows the great cost involved in extending even those networks which have been almost entirely naturalized, i.e. those of the natural sciences. The central example is Louis Pasteur’s initial failure to demonstrate his theory of bacteria over and against the then prevalent theory of spontaneous generation, that is, that life could spring into existence out of nothing. By creating sterile, airtight samples, Pasteur hoped to demonstrate his “uncovering” of the natural laws of microbiology. The only problem was that his samples kept showing up to critics already contaminated, seemingly validating the theory of spontaneous generation instead. It was only once pasteurian methodology had been adopted by other labs that the “truth” of microbiology became possible and more or less universal. Latour’s provocation is to undermine the absolute universality of the natural sciences. In other words, the point is not to question the validity of microbiology, but rather to show how microbiology, like all “natural” laws, depends on the careful creation and maintenance of an environment which *makes* them true. Similarly, Marx’s intent is not to question the active force of market laws, but instead, like Latour, to show that these laws have a prehistory, that the environment in which they were created was (in this case) violently created, in order that they may be true.

in order for the modern concepts of labor, employment, unemployment, to spring into being. This, again, is the “double freedom” of the modern worker: the theoretical social mobility offered to the newly emancipated serf or peasant is purchased at the cost of all self-sufficiency and social support. One is only free to work for an employer once the old understanding of work as life, work as means of subsistence has been eradicated. As long as there still exists an outside to market dynamics, as was the case in traditional society, the intended proletariat would continue to operate within old “inefficient” systems ordered around communal survival. The next section explores how the old networks of social production were dissolved, specifically how the means of production were stripped from the future working class, and the intermediary effects this dissolution produced.

IV. The Disappearing World: Property

Just as speaking of “labor” in the pre-modern leads inevitably to anachronism, surprisingly, the modern understanding of “land” proves equally problematic. A central difficulty to understanding the societal position of land in traditional society is the significant shift which has occurred in the meaning of “property” since the end of the 18th century. In *German Home Towns*, Mack Walker highlights this problem by detailing the multivalence of “Eigentum” as used by 18th century jurist and social theorist Justus Möser:

> *Eigentum* means property, of course, and so when Möser spoke of it as something held in common within the native German community he seemed to be describing a kind of primitive communism; and so, sometimes, he was. *Eigentum* means property; and so, when Möser spoke of it as a prerequisite for

> full membership in a community he seemed to be describing a personal property qualification for citizenship, and sometimes he meant that too. (3)

Certainly there appears to be an element of the modern understanding of property as defined by Möser; in order to be a citizen, it was necessary for a person to have an individual legal and customary claim to property. But property also meant specific, socially determined rights to land, rights which simultaneously recognized manifold communal claims. There is no contradiction between the two senses because “Eigentum is a social quality and only derivatively an economic one.” Just as the economies of markets and labor (or what would then more accurately have been described as human activity) were submerged in *social* economies, that is, economies in which economic value is determined by law and custom instead of market value, “property” was significant primarily for the social relations it described: “Even when [Möser] used the term conventionally to mean economic good and facilities, what interested him was what conferred property and what property conferred.” For this reason, “property” understood as *personal* or *private* ownership is a poor descriptor for land relations as they existed in estate society, and “land rights” proves more accurate. This is an important distinction, because as Sheehan notes, “land was the basis of wealth, the primary source of employment, and the means of subsistence” with over 80 percent of German population living in rural communities during the 18th century (90, 93). It is possible for the modern observer to understand the primacy of land in feudal society and still fundamentally misinterpret this significance. It is not the raw economic productive potential of the

duke's land which makes him powerful, but rather the social systems which granted him a specific kind of (privileged) access to that land.[6]

It is therefore somewhat misleading for Walker to suggest that citizenship was contingent upon property. As he himself states, "[s]trangers and outsiders by definition cannot have this propriety and identity. Nobody can who is free of communal bonds and perquisites" (4). Again, it is useful to return briefly to the rules surrounding guild membership: while it was technically possible for "outsiders" (people whose families had no connection to the guild system) to petition for membership, albeit at significantly greater cost, these petitions could be (and in most cases were) denied for purely social grounds, be it the result of "bad character," being a "foreigner" (i.e. not a citizen of the local township), or simply as an attempt to limit total membership. In reality, the higher fee required of outsiders distracts from the basic truth: guild membership was not something which could be purchased at any cost, as it was not primarily an economic position. Similarly, citizenship was not something attained through land acquisition, but rather as a member of a town, a family, a house, one enjoyed certain privileges to the surrounding land. In other words, land rights were not a function of a market economy,

[6] This may seem like moot distinction, as one could similarly argue that even modern property is "socially" conferred in this sense. Personal property is a function of legal agreements, or in other words, socially sanctioned contracts granted by societal institutions of power. These personal property rights permit certain actions while forbidding others, and as such could also be described as "land rights" conferring a specific kind of access to the property in question. And, indeed, property *is* still a social institution, and to conceive of it in this manner is particularly fruitful in uncovering systemic inequality and particularity in what is purportedly a universal and egalitarian function of market dynamics. However, over-stressing the social nature of personal property neglects the very real inversion which took place; land is understood now first and foremost in its economic function and only secondarily as a social belonging. The incumbent rights of the modern proprietor in many regards outstrip those of a feudal king: they may often unilaterally sell, buy, build, deforest, farm, drill, all through the initial conference of *ownership*. Indeed, ownership, as will be shown, are land rights defined through the specific exclusion of other claims, absolute and binary in their function.

but rather the product of social relations with profound economic consequences. To say that land was the foundation of power in feudal society is not the same as to argue that property rights determined social function, as these rights were themselves the product of the social order and not vice versa. As Polanyi writes:

> Under feudalism and the guild system land and labor formed part of the social organization itself… Land, the pivotal element in the feudal order, was the basis of the military, judicial, administrative, and political system; *its status and function were determined by legal and customary rule*. Whether its possession was transferable or not, and if so, to whom and under what restrictions; what the rights of property entailed, to what uses some types of land might be put--*all these questions were removed from the organization of buying and selling, and subjected to an entirely different set of institutional regulations*. (72, emphasis added)

This situation is a source of great unease for modern scholars. Land, which Sheehan deems an "apparently so solid and visible a commodity" as property, disappears into an overlapping and interdependent web of "property rights, privileges, and obligations" (93). Instead of a single owner of an "apparent" commodity, multiple parties of varying social strata exercise differing degrees of legal and customary rights. When confronted with the unquestionably significant holdings of the aristocracy, church and crown, it is therefore necessary to remember that these possessions did not represent absolute control. Marx brings this reality into sharp relief when he states that not only did the Silesian serf in this sense "own" the piece of land attached to their house, they were additionally the "co-proprietor of the common land" and that more significantly, this legal and customary claim was of precisely the same character as that of the feudal lord (877). Obviously the

rights of a lord vs. those of a serf were wildly different in terms of the access and privileges which they granted, but neither was more binding than the other, meaning that a serf's right to procure subsistence was protected by the same system of social bonds which granted the lord the right of the hunt, the ability to demand a percentage of harvest, etc. (878).

What this produced was a multi-layering of different kinds of propriety in regards to the same physical space; on the bureaucratic side, it meant in some cases that the same piece of land would be subject to taxation from as many as four different sources (Sagarra 147). In an essay cataloguing land relations in the late 18th century, Johann von Justi discovered that there were "no less than eight different types of tenancy, each of which might be held by one of five different kinds of farmer--and neither the type of his tenancy nor his status was an infallible indicator of a peasant's economic position" (Sheehan 94). The multiple claims which could be made of any particular space also complicated practices such as inheritance. Whether partible or impartible (that is, bequeathed in its entirety to the eldest male heir or divided between all male children), the land which was passed on necessarily carried with it the web of privileges and obligations it had had in the previous generation. "Ownership" in the sense of the ability to bequeath land to subsequent generations did not dissolve the rights others may possess to till the land or to husband animals on it. It was therefore not so much the *land* which was inherited, but a specific kind of access to it. Sheehan, with an eye to the future, characterizes these webs as backwards obstacles to progress, "The sheer complexity and impenetrable interdependence of traditional rural society retarded innovation" (101). What this teleological view of history overlooks is the protection this "web of values and institutions" surrounding land rights provided to all members of

society, from the lord to the serf. What retroactively is portrayed by Sheehan, Sagarra and, to a lesser extent, Walker, as the suffocating, stagnant reality of daily life in estate society, was for the contemporary citizen or subject a guarantee of stability and social protection. For rural Germany, land rights, the means of subsistence and position within society were all different aspects of an indivisible whole. Similar to the difference previously indicated between the modern understanding of work as labor/employment and the premodern conception of work as life/belonging, to have land rights was to have both a symbolic as well as *physical* place in society. The literal quality of this physical belonging is highlighted when one looks at contemporary terms used to describe those on the fringes of society; for example, in Austria, those outside of society were referred to as Schubpersonen, which as Sagarra notes, indicates both their position outside of society as well as their forced transiency (163). It is therefore not surprising that moments of instability or overpopulation were marked by increases in the laws governing vagrancy; premodern society could only function so long as it was able to control and organize its members; everyone needed work, and everyone needed a specific circumscribed attachment to the land. Just as guilds were organized on the principle of providing stable employment to guild members through limiting production and membership (as opposed to the potentially limitless production of capitalist organizations), it was critical to feudal townships to guard membership (and thereby land allocation) jealously, as this was also the primary mechanism through which the security of its citizens was assured. So while the laws against vagrancy themselves were of little effect (and indeed would prove disastrous once population growth became universal and sustained in the second half of the 18th century), they nevertheless once again indicate the indivisible link between access to land and place in society.

The manifold claims and obligations existing simultaneously also point to an additional quality of the social perception of land within traditional society, a quality which has been described alternatively as its non-contiguous, locally-specific, or centripetal nature. In order to understand how land was globally perceived in premodern society, or indeed, how, in significant ways, a global perspective was absent, it is useful to delineate the modern understanding of land as *territory*, which Benedict Anderson describes in *Imagined Communities* as: "In the modern conception, state sovereignty is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory" (19). [7] Although here Anderson is speaking of conceptions of state sovereignty, "territory" understood as a full, flat and evenly distributed legally demarcated space is equally applicable to modern conceptions of property. When one imagines geographical spaces today, one imagines a bird's eye perspective of the land, neatly divided into colorful blocks indicating countries, states, counties, properties, etc. The owner of property imagines a continuous field flowing unbroken to the edges of the domain. Borders are absolute: something either belongs completely to the property, or stands outside of it. Without too much distortion, it is therefore possible to claim that the modern understanding of property and state sovereignty operates by and large as a binary system, owned/not owned, under/outside the jurisdiction thereof.

Interestingly, this empty, continuous, all-filling spatial conception is a direct corollary to the previously mentioned modern conception of temporality as empty,

[7] It is in itself significant that the modern conception of territory is in *squares*. A square is a perfect geometrical construct, the contours of which are in no way affected by natural or human-made formations. The binary nature of modern borders means that, the house, the rock, the river are either contained, excluded, or even potentially bifurcated by them. An empty idea of space precedes the materiality of land, thereby qualitatively homogenizing it. Within a property, the relative value of land may vary, but not the degree of ownership.

progressive and all-pervasive. This is not by chance; as will be explored later in greater detail, the creation of homogeneous space (and populations) relies on a specific understanding of time, namely an abstract idea of simultaneity, now-ness, from which individual apperception has been removed and each minute is interchangeable for the one which preceded it and the one which will follow. Reciprocally, in order to think something like abstract time moving forwards evenly in all spaces, differences between these spaces must likewise be conceptually leveled. In order to operate as generic properties of existence, time and space must be emptied of all variation of experience and reality.[8] It is precisely these concepts of empty, homogeneous time and space upon which Sheehan's "solid and obvious" commodity of land necessarily depends, for as Polanyi states (in accordance with Marx) "labor and land are no other than the human beings themselves of which every society consists and the natural surroundings in which it exists," (76). But Polanyi's formulation can be pushed further in order to highlight the modern assumptions necessary for its function; labor is nothing more than time and land is nothing more than space. The expression "time is money" is familiar to modern ears. But one could just as confidently assert that "space is money." The commodification of land means that every space, no matter how remote, unused, or seemingly productively worthless, must be registered within a theoretical global network of ownership. Ownership is absolute precisely because it deals with potentialities, and not with actual use; it is possible to own land which has never been seen or traversed in recorded

[8] This is, in part, the inversion argued by Kant in *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*: by making space and time *a priori* to human perception, that is, the conditions of possibility for experience, as opposed to qualities *of* experience, they are emptied of all imaginable content. They become instead mathematical abstractions; time is not the time of seasons, birth, death, ancestral epics, but rather an empty line racing forwards, against which human and natural history must be measured. Similarly, space is not a quality of an opening in a forest, rolling fields or the endless expanse of the ocean, but rather a vacuum, an all-pervasive grid which is necessarily imagined as filling not only the distance between objects but the space within those objects themselves.

history. The promise of property is that all current and future as-of-yet-unimagined uses are granted to the proprietor *to the exclusion of all others*. “Ownership” in the modern sense is therefore by its very nature conceptual and speculative, and fundamentally breaks the link between land and usage in two ways, through futurity and exclusivity. Futurity dictates that it is not the usage of today, but rather the potential use tomorrow which grants value. For a simple agrarian example, it is not the crops harvested last season, but the anticipated crops of all seasons to come which modern ownership denotes. But ownership of this kind is more radical than simply extending current usage into the future. The rupture with usage is described specifically by the absolute, universal, blanketing quality of ownership. Ownership extends down into the earth, up into the sky, and infinitely forward into an imagined future. Land as commodity accommodates all as of yet unimagined uses just as surely as it does the continuation of current or previous use. Crude oil, rare-earth metals required for batteries and circuitry, the presence of wind, sun, water as sources of energy or waste management, all belong to the owner of this commodity of space as surely as do their clothes, farm animals, house. This is because the second aspect of ownership, exclusivity, further decouples land and ownership from actual usage. The owner of land is imagined to be in direct possession of all portions of this homogeneous space equally and simultaneously, to the exclusion of all other claims. To own is precisely to deny competing claims, on every flat square inch, in every conceivable, empty, uniform minute moving forward. The difference between the ownership of a lord and a proprietor, is that a tenant of the modern proprietor only has recourse to the initial legal compact, because ultimately, the land is the proprietor’s and no one else’s.

What is described here is obviously the ideal case of ownership within capitalism. In most cases, other societal mechanisms infringe upon the absolute autonomy of the proprietor, in the form of renters' rights, zoning laws, environmental legislation, etc. However, even granting the existence of such institutions, they have proved remarkably flimsy when compared against both the strength of property with which they directly compete in the modern world, or against the customary and legal limits imposed by traditional society which they replaced. In most instances, when encountered, these modern social protections are swiftly and easily circumvented, as the sanctity and inalienability of individual property is the sacred foundational myth upon which modern citizenship is built, indistinguishable from the individual "rights" which governmental agencies are sworn to protect. This has the somewhat counter-intuitive effect that the only serious threats to the integrity of ownership come from within the system of property itself rather than through external social limitations; while theoretically every claim of ownership is equal and legally binding (hence the link in democracies to universal suffrage), in reality properties of scale exert undue influence on their smaller kin, either through subverting market dynamics or extra-legal pressure, with the general tendency for ever greater consolidation at the expense of the absolute inalienability of individual property claims.[9] Under the modern understanding of property, ownership and profit generation have become indistinguishable, that is to say, the commodity aspect of land

[9] Of course, there are other social factors beyond mere scale which can further weaken an individual's absolute right to property, most obviously race and gender. Even as it becomes possible for women or non-white people to possess property, this ownership is long viewed (or in some cases, in perpetuity) as contingent and transitory. The woman proprietor owns the land *only until* she can be married or produce a male child. Likewise, agreements with non-white proprietors are always implicitly or explicitly bracketed; you may own this land *until* it is needed for white ranchers, *until* it is necessary to build an interstate or railroad, or even *as* the land is made uninhabitable or unusable. While such instances seem to suggest the possibility of social structures superseding capitalist imperatives, these inequities often work in tandem with and not against the tendency of property to consolidate into ever fewer hands.

has supplanted all other conceptualizations to the extent that in the quest for profit maximization, the theoretical productive potential of a given space tends to supersede the individual claim to ownership. Sheehan's frustration with the inefficiency of traditional society is an expression of the modern understanding of land as progressive, expansionary: it is *natural* for land to find its optimum usage through consolidation and repurposing, just as it is wrong-headed to an equal degree for a single individual to attempt to resist market forces and cling to a merely-legal right to property, a folly made visible in the modern example of the single family home engulfed on all sides by office buildings. Land as property, land as commodity, land as empty potential thereby eventually tends to subvert the absolute character of ownership. The true value and meaning of a space exist in its future, not precedents set by the legal and social structures which determined its past.

Where land understood as property tends towards ever greater consolidation and the removal of restrictions to productive potential due to its basis in futurity and exclusivity, ownership within traditional society was instead defined by carefully circumscribed specific use cases for the various "owning" parties.[10] In this sense, the land to which the serf, the lord, the cotter, the tradespeople all laid claim, even if the same "space" in the modern sense, were for each party a fundamentally different location. For the lord it could mean hunting rights and a percentage of agricultural produce, as well as innumerable other taxations and privileges. For the serf it could mean a hut passed from generation to generation, along with rights to a small plot for

[10] Therefore tending towards ever greater fragmentation and layering of claims as populations increased.

subsistence farming and use of the communal land for narrowly defined purposes.[11] Instead of the aforementioned neat, colorful blocks dividing the countryside into different territories/properties, it is perhaps more accurate to imagine something akin to the tiresome *Family Circus* cartoons in which little Billy's daily adventures are depicted as a tangle of overlapping dashed lines. Land rights are inseparably linked to land use; they are concrete and directly linked to the lives and livelihood of those who possess them. The right to grow food, to husband animals, or to gather wood were not abstract claims on future profits, but rather represent an individual's traditional function within society, one based on custom and historical precedent stretching back for generations. Land rights make degrees of ownership thinkable; land which "belongs" to the crown, church or state could simultaneously belong to many other parties without contradiction, or rather, exist mutually in non-exclusive tension. Land rights and privileges were a constant source of debate, but this very friction marked land rights as critical points of connection between the various members of society, connections for which the land itself was the nexus. It is in this sense that land rights can be said to determine citizenship; not in the sense that it would later carry of an individual buying their place in society, but rather in that an individual's connection or lack of connection to the land determined who they were and what they did.

[11] Understanding this difference helps explain the severe punishments associated with the crime of poaching. Poaching was not a question of property in the modern sense, i.e. the poacher was not maimed, hanged, branded, cast out as a result of trespassing an imagined border, of being in the wrong physical space. The problem was rather a question of what the poacher did in that space, namely killing animals which were protected by the rights of the lord. A poacher could well have had claims to the land in which they wrongfully hunted, be it the right to harvest berries, to collect firewood, etc. The problem was instead that by attacking the animals, they were in effect assaulting the person of the aristocratic possessor themself, and it was this crime against the noble person which was then recreated on their own flesh.

This conception of land extended to the macro scale, to the conception of state boundaries and the rule of sovereigns. Anderson writes that in absence of the modern concept of territory, “in the older imagining, where states were defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another” (19). This difference in the conceptualization of space, or rather, the absence of an abstraction of space, had diverse and far reaching effects on the organization of society. According to Anderson, it is this organization which explains “the ease with which pre-modern empires and kingdoms were able to sustain their rule of immensely heterogeneous and often not even contiguous, populations for long periods of time.” In other words, the rule of these “immensely heterogeneous” populations was possible precisely because no attempt at homogenization was made. The King of France, the Queen of England, were not the sovereigns of nations or territories but rather the rulers of staggeringly long and complex lists of individual provinces and towns, the result of generations of interfamilial negotiations, a fact reflected by titles which often were several pages in length. The aristocracy, like the peasants they ruled, were regionally bound, albeit at an entirely different scale. Indeed, for this reason it is dangerous to refer to *the* aristocracy, to imagine an abstract, internally coherent group: “To the question ‘Who is the Comte de X’ the normal answer would have been, not ‘a member of the aristocracy,’ but ‘the lord of X,’ the uncle of the Baronne de Y,’ or ‘a client of the Duc de Z.’” (Anderson 7). Sheehan also addresses this phenomenon, noting that not only had “land remained the most acceptable source of an aristocrat’s wealth and the most secure foundation for his family’s honour” in the 18th century, but that the specific, regionally

bounded nature of the German aristocracy was already indicated by the use of *von* as an honorific, a preposition which directly ties individual influence to a place (129).[12]

Individual connection to the land remained strong throughout the 18th century, as the German populace continued to be overwhelmingly rural: Sheehan estimates that 80% of the population lived in rural communities (90). As to the remaining 20%, Sheehan is quick to emphasize that the dichotomy of city/country must be rejected. The manufacture of the city, and the production of the immediate countryside where in most cases wholly symbiotic and represented a closed loop. The city produced finished goods and the countryside provided raw materials intended exclusively for the local market, leading to the sphere of influence which in most cases was inscribed by a single day's walk (107). Even in the rare exceptions of interregional or even international trading hubs, it is important to remember that these only ever represented the trade between individual cities. Sheehan writes "A map of central European commerce… would show regional and international connections; there would be nothing 'German' about it" (112). Clearly, to use the word "international" here is inaccurate, since the point is to establish the lack of inter-national trade--the clear absence of anything like a nation state, or national territory having been demonstrated by Anderson and Polanyi, and indeed this is the point Sheehan seeks to make as well. And of course, compared with contemporary regions such as England and France, the German speaking provinces were fractured and lacking cohesion to an even higher degree, even more bound to regional specificity.

[12] Relatedly, Sheehan notes that the very idea of *Herrschaft* binds the source of power to the body of the individual, the *Herr* (127). Power was thereby in many cases doubly local; *von* indicates a specific region as the source of power, while *Herrschaft* indicates a specific person. Power, person and place formed an indivisible whole, one which did not rely on abstractions or external reference beyond the divine sanction of this unity. To have power was to be lord of *this* land containing *these* people and granting *these* privileges.

[13] Collectively what this means is that as the bonds between individuals, and individuals to regions were dissolved and replaced with the speculative, fungible emptiness demanded by capitalist endeavours, there existed no mechanisms, social or even conceptually, by which to reintegrate those who were displaced, no universal identities or roles to rely on once the old situating webs were destroyed. The reorganization of the relations of production did not produce "unemployed Germans," but rather a "Haufen" of non-persons who shared nothing beyond their exclusion from society, as will be explored in the final section.

V. The Creation of a Non-identical Many

Nearly every attempt at a cohesive history of premodern "Germany" begins with the same non-statement, some version of "variation was the one constant." On the one hand, variation-as-constant can be read as a boilerplate apology, one issued by historians before they invariably draw generalizing conclusions all the same. But what makes this gesture interesting to the current work is that it represents a perfectly crystallized attempt at a positive description of absence. As has been shown, the "Janusgesicht" of cultural terms like markets, labor and land makes itself sharply felt when crossing from the relatively modern foundations of the 19th century into the 18th century and earlier. The problem in all instances is a presumed level of generalization and abstraction which is wholly absent in traditional society. Land never existed as a theoretical space, but rather was always already *this* aristocratic family's holding to

[13] As a particularly vivid example of regional difference, Sheehan writes that after Goethe's move from Frankfurt to Leipzig in 1765 to study law,"his clothes, speech, and manners marked him as a foreigner; some female companions told him, none too gently, that he looked as if he had 'dropped down out of another world'' (72).

which *these* people had such and such claims.[14] There were markets and, in some isolated instances, people even received wages based on market production and prices. However, there was no *one* market, no abstraction of an all-encompassing clearinghouse, one which included not only all members of society, but also all time and space, now and in the future (and as has been shown, one which also erroneously tries to lay claim to the entirety of human history). Instead, all trade was "local" in the sense that it remained the isolated exchange between specific individuals, or at the largest scale, cities. One therefore wasn't employed, unemployed, or any grey area in between, one had a social place (and physical place as well, since in most instances work was inextricably bound to a location) within society, or one stood outside, left with no recourse but the few itinerant professions, begging or crime. It was societal position which determined where one worked, for whom, for how long, and for what compensation, not market laws.

The fact that social and work relations were the result of an inflexible hierarchy between individuals, and not an abstraction based on the perceived market value of the labor performed, resulted in two related truths of traditional society. The first is the inalienability of rights and privileges. Sheehan, in an attempt to highlight the extreme inequity which existed prior to the "emancipation" of humankind, notes that, in the absence of any form of meritocracy, the linking of birth and privilege meant that the rights of the aristocracy were inviolably connected to their person (125). To reiterate a point made earlier, standing was not a function of wealth, but rather wealth often (but not

[14] One can already imagine the difficulties presented by the "discovery" of the New World. For the first time, European traditional society experienced seemingly limitless *space*, since the concrete claims and connections of the local inhabitants to the land were either invisible or considered invalid, forcing new perspectives on the meaning and possibilities of land.

always) corresponded to social standing. Indeed, even the exceptional cases are illuminating; the individuals which comprised the group which is retroactively termed *the* aristocracy in actuality described a huge range of social privileges and material circumstances, from land barons of staggering holdings to spinsters with nothing to their name save their title. In rare instances, therefore, even within the premodern world, it was possible for a wealthy peasant's properties to exceed those of an impoverished noble.[15] This, however, did not change the social standing between the two individuals. Social customs and laws prevented the wealthy peasant from simply adopting the guise of nobility: these laws dictated which positions the peasant could hold in government, whom they could hire to work for them, all the way down to the clothes they could legally wear, where they sat in church and of course, whom they could marry. What Sheehan misses in his rush to the emancipation of humankind (overlooking for the moment the overwhelming continuation of generational wealth and privilege within "meritocratic" society) is that this same inviolability of rights applied to the lower estates. For the lower strata, too, were born into a specific network of social relations, a constellation which carried with it certain rights, privileges and obligations. This is a fact which can be easily overlooked when confronted with the extreme inequity of the traditional world. It is certainly the case that the privileges enjoyed by the nobility bore almost no resemblance to those of a peasant or a serf. Nevertheless, these rights and obligations are of the same *character*; precisely because social position was not earned and could not be

[15] Social aberrations of this kind occurred with ever greater frequency as the 18th century continued, though even so the wealthy peasant remained a rarity. It was also sometimes possible for these individuals to purchase a title and thereby enter the nobility; however, this should not be confused with nobility being merely a function of wealth. Indeed, the continued necessity of the wealthy to buy titles throughout the 18th century indicates the continued supremacy of the social over the economic. Even the newly wealthy thought of themselves not as proto-capitalists, but rather continued to try and place themselves within the security of the traditional order.

bought, it could not be taken away. A serf was born a serf, with obligations to a certain lord, into a particular hut, with access to a common land, all of which would also be the birthright of all generations to follow, for good and ill.

The conditions of the lower strata were often conditions of extreme hardship, and times of scarcity impacted these populations with the greatest force--drought, spoilage, pests could all lead to huge increases in mortality. Even in instances of great hardship, however, the difference between the lot of the rich and the poor was one of degrees; though less affected by famine, the elite remained vulnerable to disease and other sources of human misery. The expectations of the traditional world, again, were never those of happiness or self-fulfillment, but rather collective survival. The extreme degree of interdependence within premodern society is visible even in the nature of the privileges and obligations granted to nobles; privileges were always mutually constituting, only given meaning through concrete, strictly prescribed interrelation. In fact, privileges *were* interrelation: a lord was guaranteed X percentage of produce or number of days of service per year, by Y person working on Z land.[16] East of the Elbe, there existed a set of labor relations which to modern economic laws seem paradoxical; a shortage of labor was accompanied by the extreme unfreedom of the working populace. Far from enjoying higher wages or greater mobility as would be expected in a market economy, serfdom continued to flourish in Prussia, Silesia, Pomerania and elsewhere into the 17th and even 18th century, long after it had disappeared in western German provinces. In part this has been explained by the colonial nature of these territories, with the populations ruled more like a conquered populace than subjects of

[16] In the case of the hunt, service even took on a theatrical character in which both parties were required to dress in specific, antiquated attire in order to make the relational hierarchy more visible than it would have already been under normal circumstances.

the crown. But what it also indicates was the need of the ruling to strengthen the bonds to the ruled as a matter of survival; for without the guaranteed presence of a peasant and serf population, they would be lords of nothing, lacking both the material and symbolic connections which were the essence of their privilege. In *Die Feudalgesellschaft,* Marc Bloch details the process of vassal payment within the early first period of feudal society, which is describes a system of payment external to a wage system. Due to what Bloch attributes to a scarcity and inconsistency of minted coins, the aristocracy could not rely on the function of currency in order to bind others in service to them. Instead, the powerful had two options: first, they could directly house and clothe those who served them. Second, they could offer lands to those sworn to them, thereby indirectly providing the necessary means of survival. However, Bloch notes that in both cases, these forms of payment serve to build connections “die von den Abhängigkeit des Lohnsystems sehr verschieden waren” although in “entgegengesetztem Sinn” (106). In the first case, the direct housing and clothing of subjects resulted in bonds which created great interdependence and mutual reliance, bringing the individuals closer symbolically as well as physically. In the second instance, however, the granting of land access has both centripetal as well as centrifugal effects: it binds the subject to the Herrschaft in that it is a relationship predicated on the recognition of the superior claims of the Herr. At the same time, land rights grant a degree of autonomy foreign to the wage labor of the market economy, namely degrees of self-sufficiency, as discussed above.

Again, it is the specificity of these bonds which distinguish the pre-modern from the modern. Within a market economy, the employer requires work to be completed and offers monetary compensation in exchange for this work. Who does this work is irrelevant so long as they are capable of completing the task. From the employee side,

they are free to work for anyone, anywhere, at any time, and are expected to sell their labor as advantageously as possible. Theoretically, either party can terminate the relationship at any moment, as the only link between them is created and dissolved within the moment of payment.[17] Interchangeability and mobility are the face of the modern world, and money is the ultimate expression of this universal abstraction. Money functions independent of any individual person, act or thing, and instead functions as a representation of pure relational value. As such, the obviating of physical currency within a market economy is inevitable; it is not the material coin which contains value, but rather its function as a signifier. Since the signified is precisely not a thing, but rather an abstraction of a difference, it achieves its ultimate representation in the equally abstract, be it the electronic ledgers of the stock exchange or more recently, in the randomly generated encrypted keys of engineered scarcity in the form of blockchain currencies. In other words, as was recognized by Marx, value doesn't rest in the things produced, nor in the rarity of gold, silver (or today, prime-numbers), but rather in the relational difference between people, of which the former are merely a manifestation or representation respectively.

As a result, the economic links connecting members of modern society are both looser and less clearly defined, while paradoxically bringing all members closer together. The bonds are looser in the sense that individual economic connections are transient and infinitely replaceable. The form of compensation is entirely symbolic and bereft of particularity, and the work performed is characterless, in the sense that it is not an

[17] Of course, this is not to say that the positions are equal: where the employee works for subsistence, the employer seeks surplus value. This discrepancy produces the recognized imbalance in the bargaining potential of each party, with the employee frequently forced to work under desperate circumstances in order to achieve basic sustenance.

obligation required of a certain person, or a symbolic enacting of social differentiation. This is not to say that the modern workplace is not riddled with symbolic acts of dominance and subjection, but rather that this is not the primary form of compensation. “Loyalty” of the employee to the employer or of the employer to the employee can exist contractually through ancillary privileges or direct compensation, but the relationship remains fundamentally anonymous and fungible. However, this very interchangeability and lack of specificity results in a general drawing together as it loosens the individual connections. This is because the lack of specificity as to who should perform what for whom means that anyone and everyone is included within the societal calculus of employment. Those without jobs, land, homes, are integrated as part of the “unemployed” into an expanded concept of social relations known as Society. Collectively the unemployed represent labor potential, a resource which although currently untapped, *could* be utilized in the future. They thereby serve two important functions: on the one hand, they constitute a labor reserve for an economic system which demands limitless resources both in raw materials and in labor. And second, even while seemingly inactive, their very existence exerts influence on the labor conditions of those in society who are actively employed; the more the ranks of the unemployed swell, the more employers can push wages down, as the expendability of the individual employee becomes ever more evident. As mentioned earlier, an inversion has occurred: in the traditional world, one needed a physical place and a specific social position in order to be considered a part of society. By contrast, in accordance with the idea of the double freedom of the worker, within the modern world it is precisely the lack of specific connections or claims which marks an individual as part of a potential workforce.

This inversion has several important implications: first, the expansive, impersonal, fungible concept of labor eliminates the conceptual possibility of an "outside" to society. No matter how dejected or miserable the individual, no matter how excluded from social systems of care and support, they are still tabulated in the columns of potential labor, with their very dejection further marking them as potentially "motivated" workers.[18] Second, beyond its conceptual ability to accommodate the disenfranchised, a society based on the principles of a market economy is also more readily able to adjust to drastic social change in the form of population growth. Because of the fungibility of workers, and the fluidity which exists between the various stages of employment, because individuals are no longer bound to a specific profession or place, an increase in population is registered as a growth of the potential labor pool and thereby affects labor prices, but does nothing to the fundamental organization of society or the assumptions upon which it is based.[19] This is not to say that such changes necessarily occur without hardship to the populations in question (and thereby serve as a potential source of social unrest), but rather that it has no larger implications for the character of society, since society itself is no longer defined by specific bonds between specific people working and living generationally in a particular area.

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[18] This is in part an effect of the new naturalistic understanding of society which accompanied the establishment of market society. Instead of society understood as the work of the divine/mankind, human interactions are submerged into the animal world. This represents a shift away from even the various "invisible hand" theories circulating in the second half of the 18th century, which still maintained a separate, human realm guided by divine providence, towards an understanding of society which is governed by hidden physical laws. Within this new understanding, the plight of the poor was slowly recast from a tragedy and societal failing to the necessary function of natural economic systems.

[19] A shrinking or static population, on the other hand, is a real danger for a society based on market economies. Because it depends on unlimited resources, labor and markets, a market economy is forced into crisis any time that one of the three elements stagnates or diminishes. This leads to drastic "correctives" such as inflation, famine and war.

The situation was clearly other in the premodern world. Because of its intricate specificity, the functioning of the premodern world was predicated on a degree of stability and calculability. The guild, the town, the organization of peasant farmers, land rights (including inheritance and communal land access), nearly all social systems assumed a population which neither moved nor changed rapidly. This indicates the second truth of the traditional world, which in some ways is merely the inverse of the inviolability of the rights of those who belonged; namely the absolute exclusion of those with no connections or claims to the established social order. In the premodern, there unquestionably *was* an outside of society, people "who did not fit into the traditional social groups, who had no corporate existence and therefore no legal status," people such as "the Jews, the gypsies, pedlars and beggars, the victims of wars and natural catastrophes… lastly there were those cast out from society on the charge of being in league with the powers of darkness" (Sagarra 156). These peoples, though certainly not treated equally, all represented the same kind of problem to the corporative social order. The problem they posed was of a radically different nature to the previously described market pressure provided by the poor, unemployed or homeless in a market organized society. Within the modern conception of society, all individuals are considered part of the greater whole, regardless of their current position within society.[20] In a market economy society, when the poor or homeless are viewed as a problem (and not as a

[20] A possible (and troubling) exception to the tabulation of society is represented by illegal immigrants and asylum seekers. As noted by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, within a global system in which rights and belonging are a function of national citizenship, the stateless are in a uniquely vulnerable position. Similar to the excluded groups in traditional society, they find themselves without legal status or recognition, as was tragically the case for the expatriated Jews of central Europe, and continues to haunt dislocated populations. Even so, these non-civic members of society are still typically included in calculations of the labor market--and when they are excluded/murdered, their loss is often tacitly expressed in terms of a "wasted resource."

natural, necessary and indeed beneficial mechanism stabilizing economic “laws,”) the solutions focus on heightened social integration, through employment, public works projects, or indirectly, prison. The problem of the disenfranchised in traditional, corporative society, by contrast, was one of finding effective means of exclusion. Again, the manner in which these groups were treated varied greatly: the “worthy poor” were a source of concern for whom localized systems of Christian almsgiving existed. The undeserving poor, on the other hand, were the subject of frequent anti-vagrancy legislation which sought to drive them to other regions, and the once frequent highway robbers were more or less exterminated through centuries of capital punishment. Finally, ethnic minorities were exploited where necessary, as was famously the case with Jewish lenders, and excluded as a matter of course; Sagarra writes that as of 1750, “neither the state authorities nor individuals thought to question their right to treat Jews differently from other human beings” (160).

Despite the huge range of interactions with the disenfranchised, ranging from charitable alms to forceful removal to hangings, one thing common to the treatment of all groups outside of the corporative order was the unquestioned continued exclusion of these groups. The same specificity of interpersonal relations which guaranteed the inviolability of individual rights, privileges and obligations, conversely made the introduction of new members nearly impossible, no matter how “deserving.” To return briefly to the example of an external petition for guild membership; not only were the dues required of a magnitude greater than those required from local (i.e., other citizens of the town of the appropriate estate), but they were often nonetheless rejected. Similarly, gaining citizenship to a town was not a function of money, but rather a closely guarded social privilege. These cases furthermore assume an applicant *who is already a*

member of the body social. What they represent is primarily the difficulty experienced in attempting to move laterally, to change physical location, within estate structures, from one town's guild to another, from a member of the rural population to a citizen of a town. What this again indicates is the fixity and specificity of social standing. Moving vertically within estate society was another magnitude of difficulty greater, but did occur in rare instances and at great cost, as in the case of already wealthy peasants or traders purchasing aristocratic titles, with the incumbent rights and privileges. But to move from the negative space surrounding society to a position within it was, up to and largely including the second half of the 18th century, unthinkable. Sheehan refers to the gap between those "who had a place and those who did not" as the "deepest and clearest division in the traditional order." He continues:

> Greater than the difference between aristocrat and commoner, townsman and peasant, freeman and serf, perhaps even greater than the difference between men and women, this gap divided the population into two distinct groups. To be outside the confines of a household, a trade, or a community was to be in the ranks of those without somewhere to go, a last resort, a final source of sustenance. (86)

It was therefore paramount to remain within the established network of relations, whatever the cost, as the alternative was not an alternative but rather a shadowy non-existence of exclusion, deprivation and, frequently, death. It is this pressure to cling to one's position, however demeaned, which leads historians like Sheehan and Walker to describe the traditional order as claustrophobic and oppressive--and it was unquestionably a system of grotesque inequity and hardship. But to characterize the majority of the population as eagerly awaiting its own "emancipation" is to misconstrue

reality; despite the inequity, despite the hardship, traditional society offered the best and only known protection against the brutal vicissitudes of life as it then existed. Sheehan uses the chasm separating those within society and those without in order to explain why a servant, for example, an individual in a social position lacking realistic hope of ever establishing their own household with their own family would nevertheless choose to submit to the potentially tyrannical rule of a *Hausvater*. Ignoring for the moment the suspiciously modern dream to which servants secretly aspired,[21] it is also inaccurate to imagine staying within society, and in one's position within society, as a choice. Not only did the outside of society represent a merely negative space, an exclusion from and not an alternative to, but the inviolability of rights further signifies stability and the promise of social support. In other words, the inviolability of rights can be viewed as the positive aspect of the chasm separating those who did and those who did not belong. While great misfortune could and did force individuals or families over the precipice, the almost-static character of society, and the specificity of the bonds formed, indicates the degree of security was provided.

The security and stability of traditional society are realities which the narrative of emancipation overlooks. Furthermore, by taking an implicitly or explicitly progressive viewpoint of history, the emancipation narrative either glosses over periods of social disruption and disorder, or recasts them as moments of upheaval necessary to the

[21] Sagarra, for example, indicates that a sharp division between household members based on biological or class grounds was itself, ironically, a byproduct of the "Enlightenment and economic pressures;" in their drive to emancipate the individual on the basis of legal vs. customary rights, "they undermined the sense of corporate solidarity which, though open to abuse, had generally been a positive feature of the farming household" (142). So while estate and familial distinctions had unquestionably existed, prior to the 18th century servants and even farm hands had typically eaten and lived with those they served on a *per du* basis. Sheehan echoes this assertion, stating "but in many trades and most rural areas, the relationship between master and dependent was ill-defined and fluid" (84).

improved conditions which were to follow. The present is always the telos towards which history inexorably grinds, the unknown but imminent fate of all of those who inhabit the past. Because the material condition of the lower classes would eventually improve, because efficiency of production, the freedom of a worker to choose employment and employer to choose employees, the meritocratic promise of a casteless society, the right of each individual to establish a nuclear family, and indeed, the creation of the individual as such, are all values of the current moment, any social change which seems to indicate a movement towards these ideals is reflexively deemed good and desirable to those in the past, even while experiencing the fall out of cataclysmic societal shifts. But the future was not known to those inhabiting the past, nor was this current future the only conceivable outcome. When major historical engines of change such as the vital revolution, the expansion of international trade, the completion of the process of enclosure in central Europe, accelerated the destruction of the fabric of traditional society in the second half of the 18th century, ever increasing numbers found themselves excluded from the only system of social security and support in existence. The fact that these changes are now read as necessary steps towards the capitalist mode of production had no meaning to those experiencing the changes. Furthermore, the capitalist mechanisms which would eventually re-incorporate the disenfranchised largely did not yet exist.

As a result, an ever growing number of people were pushed out of the only conceivable and extant social system, across the chasm to the nebulous non-place of society. As this group grew from an extreme minority existing at the liminal spaces of society to an ever-expanding population of the recently disenfranchised, the pressure it exerted on society grew commensurately. It included displaced serfs, peasant farmers,

tradesmen, criminals, children, the old, the infirm, soldiers, fallen nobility, widows, ethnic minorities and any other person who found themselves closed out of the metaphorical and in some cases still literal walls of society. This fundamentally heterogeneous group had no shared identity, no collective sense of consciousness, or even a way in which to imagine a shared commonality. This group was not the unemployed, not the homeless, not the lower class. It gathered in no place, and was therefore unlike the "crowds" of the civically minded peasant farmers of the English Bread Riots, or the "masses" which would congregate slowly in cities over the course of the 19th century and become a critical object of study and politics in the early 20th century. This Many defied direct representational strategies; it was radically "non-identical." But whereas Theodore Adorno uses the term non-identical in *Negative Dialektik* to describe that which is inevitably excluded in the act of conceptualization, the unique and defining remainder which is stripped away in processes of classification, the "non-identical Many" which was created in the wake of the dissolution of the specific bonds of traditional society and existed until it was eventually written into economic class structures through material and intellectual processes was entirely negative. The non-identical Many is that excess which formed through the creation of a single temporality, a single space, a single Society. But while the non-identical Many confounded direct representation, it nevertheless exerted a huge, unseen but felt influence on writing forms. The following two chapters will be an exploration of the changes created by this non-Identical Many in theatrical and journalistic writing forms at the end of the 18th century, suggesting that we must consider this group as a collective co-author of popular-oriented forms of expression.

Chapter 2: Lenz, Social Physicist

This chapter explores the theoretical and theatrical works of Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz as evidence of the shifting temporality and social structures, of the influence of a newly formed, heterogeneous disenfranchised Many. Beyond theater's well-documented position as a medium for the multitudes, featuring the physical gathering of a heterogeneous audience, Lenz's works are uniquely suited to study the influence of the Many. From their first publication, Lenz's writing has confused and unsettled reading and theatrical audiences, due to its untraditional, fractured form and vivid depictions of human suffering. The chapter begins by examining contemporary reception, before exploring Lenz's attempt to create a theory of theater based on a combination of material determinism fused with a theory of free will. This attempt would ultimately fail, resulting in the remarkable form of Lenz's "Komödie," a unique genre of play unto itself, "Mischspiele" which are neither particularly funny nor exclusively interested in the "common," but rather serve as laboratories of society, giving voice to the diversity and discontinuities of its audience, reflecting the unfreedom characteristic for the emerging social body of Society.

I. Theatrical Reception: Chaotic, Unnatural, Disturbed

There was one aspect upon which JMR Lenz's advocates and detractors could agree: both his theoretical and theatrical works were representatives of a new *Schreibart*. This writing form is characterized by rupture and ellipsis: Lenz's essays are bizarrely punctuated, with self-described rhapsodic outbursts trailing off into dashes, question marks, thoughts interrupting one another, disintegrating metaphors, frequent appeals to

a real or imagined audience (many of his works were performed for the Straßburger Sozietät), and a cacophony of quotations. His plays are even more famously fractured. Despite almost universal criticism of what was perceived as French theater's slavish devotion to them, the wisdom of the day still advocated the three unities proposed by Aristotle's *Poetics* (although they were not codified as such until later). These unities were as follows: the unity of time demanded that a play should occur within a single 24-hour period. The unity of space required that the play take place within a single location. Finally, the unity of plot demanded that the play follow a single action from beginning to conclusion. Despite these "natural" laws, Lenz's first major play, *Der Hofmeister,* spans years, and the progression of this time is stuttering and irregular; days, months disappear without comment, children are conceived and then already born in the span of pages or minutes. Instead of one location, scenes bounce frenetically from city to city, city to town, and town to country. The locations themselves are only vaguely characterized and often wholly fictitious (a trend Lenz pushed to its limit in his second major play, *Der Neue Menoza,* by describing the location as "Hie und da" in the stage directions). Instead of following a single action and its consequences, multiple narrative arcs spin closer and further from one another, crisscrossing in a bewildering tangle of cause and effect. Characters are functionally duplicated and disappear without comment. Hidden, improbable lineages are revealed but fail to contribute meaningfully. Time and space are traveled in the blink of an eye, shattering the classical unities and demanding upwards of 35 scene changes to be staged as written (Leidner and Wurst 10). It was the form of Lenz's plays which excited and annoyed his contemporaries by turn: an anonymous review, presumably written by Johann Joachim Eschenburg, of *Der Hofmeister* in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, begins "Dieß Schauspiel verräth

durchgehends einen Mann, der zu getreuer Schilderung und Darstellung der Natur eine grosse Anlage hat; und wäre vielleicht, wenn der Verf. nicht die Hülfe der Kunst recht muthwillig verschmäht hätte, ein schönes, meisterhaftes Ganzes geworden" ("Rez.: Lenz, J.M.R.: Der Hofmeister" 369-370). The complement catches in the Eschenburg's throat; he is baffled by Lenz's *intentional* disregard for the "Vorschriften der Kunst--wovon doch die wichtigern nichts anders sind, als Vorschriften der Natur," a disregard which reduces his otherwise insightful piece into "bloß eine Reihe einzelner Gemählde, und die Hinreissung von einem Gegestande zum andern, von einer Scene, einer Gruppe, einer Handlung, einen Ort und Jahr zum andern, thut schon selbst dieser Gewalt an; denn zur Vorstellung wird dieß Stück aus mehrern Ursachen, doch wohl nie gelangen." Instead of the "masterful whole" for which the Eschenburg hoped, the reader is left holding a confusing jumble of scenes with no discernable connection, no unifying plot to stitch the disparate elements together. One nevertheless glimpses flashes of brilliance in the mess, be it the "Wahrheit der Natur… welche so manche Charactere, Handlungen und Reden auf die treffendste Art belebt, und das Stück selbst in mancher Absicht lehrreich macht," but sadly "alles ist nur hingeworfen, alles bricht ab, ehe es vor dem Zuschauer rechte Wirkung thun kann." There is something worth salvaging at the core of *Der Hofmeister*, an important lesson on humanity and nature, but whatever it is, it has been rendered unintelligible by the form of its presentation and bogged down by the inexplicable addition of "platte, alltägliche, nichtsbedeutende" scenes. It is the clear intentionality of the confusion which makes the reviewer despair of Lenz's reformation, although he does end with the hope that the then 25 year old would look back on this work in half a decade and redden with shame ("Rez.: Lenz, J.M.R.: Der Hofmeister" 370).

Imagine, then, Eschenburg's annoyance to discover that, far from an isolated incident, the disorder of *Hofmeister* was emblematic for all of Lenz's future projects. In a review of *Der neue Menoza* some pages later, Eschenburg notes with dismay that in this play one immediately recognizes the hand of the author of *Hofmeister*, continuing:

> ...eben die regellose, abentheuerliche Zusammensetzung, eben die gewaltsame Fortreissung des Lesers von einer Scene zur andern, eben die gewagten Züge der rohen wilden Natur, die aller Kunst trotzt, und oft durch diesen Trotzt selbst unnatürlich und ausschweifend wird; aber auch auf der andern Seite eben die Menschenkenntniß, eben den Zweck, die Herabwürdigung der männlichen Tugend und das Verderbniß unserer gesellschaftlichen Sitten zu bestrafen, eben die characteristische Wahrheit und das Feuer in manchen Stellen des Dialogs. ("Rez.: Lenz, J.M.R.: Der neue Menoza" 374)

In the second review, the critique has grown more focused: it is specifically the "violent" ripping of the reader from one scene to another, a wild nature which reads unnaturally. The play still can claim the same "Menschenkenntniß," but once again these flashes of brilliance are marred through presentation: "Soll Ordnung und stufenweise Darstellung eines Characters oder einer Handlung, nichts, eine plumpe Zusammenstellung extravaganter Charactere, hingeworfne unausgeführte characteristische Züge, unzusammenhängende Scenen, die, wie Schattenspielgemählde, nur hintereinander in die Laterne gesteckt werden, alles sein?"[22]

[22] That Eschenburg is forced to reach for another media in order to describe Lenz's plays, and specifically which media he thinks appropriate, is telling. Modern critics of Lenz frequently describe the "filmic" quality of his writings in order to express the way his writing seems to exceed the bounds of theatre, suggest something new. In this way, Lenz's plays can be read as pointing to future media forms in the sense similar to that described by Walther Benjamin in "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," responding to an impatience of the Many (see concluding chapter).

Menoza is the same random jumble, the same “hingeworfne” mess of scenes, a disorder of a degree that Eschenburg is forced to reach for another media form entirely to describe the experience. The changes come so frequently and rapidly and are difficult enough to read that Eschenburg poses the rhetorical question if the play was even intended for the stage at all, “Oder hat der Verf. sein Stück wirklich für die Bühne bestimmt? Soll der Theatermeister die Scene so unzählichemal, und oft um einer Rede von anderhalb oder drittehalb Zeilen willen… zauberlich verändern?” The implied answer, of course, is that Lenz cannot realistically have imagined that this could or would ever be staged. Eschenburg then lists half a dozen, to his mind, unstageable scenes as proof; two carriages passing one another for a brief exchange between occupants, a fleeting feast of beggars and other riff raff, as well as those scenes unsuitable for the stage due to their scandalous or slanderous nature. These commonsense-statements would unfortunately be substantiated: of Lenz’s three central works, *Der Hofmeister, Der neue Menoza* and *Die Soldaten*, only *Der Hofmeister* would be performed, and then only in Berlin in 1778. There is still the same regret “daß so manche glückliche, wahre und lehrreiche Scenen dieses Stücks durch die theatralische Vorstellung nicht noch mehr belebt, noch eindringender und wirksamer gemacht werden können,” but Eschenburg suspects that this is simply a problem of misguided hubris “Gehört etwan ein so großes Genie dazu, ausschweifende Dinge zu machen? Es scheinen dieses einige Leute jetzt so gewiß zu glauben, daß sie, wo sie nur etwas ausschweifendes erblicken, ausrufen: Welch ein Genie! welches Gefühl! welcher Wurf! welche Darstellung!”

These reviews are representative of the critical reception of Lenz’s work as a whole. All but the most eviscerating conceded Lenz’s ability to portray the “nature” of people, dialogue, social relations and feelings. And even the most glowing reviews

tended to touch in some form on three sources of irritation, all inter-related, and all concerning form--form understood here in the traditional sense, that is the artistic style of Lenz's writing, its syntax, structure, word choice, etc. (see the discussion of form as understood by Caroline Levine in the Introduction). The reviews contended first, that the sequence and selection of scenes seems wholly arbitrary. Second, that this arbitrariness itself was (mistakenly) intended by the author as a direct expression of "genius," both in the model advocated by the likes of Edward Young and Herder, and of which Shakespeare's writings were believed to be an example. Finally, because the scene selection is so seemingly random, many of the most bizarre or divergent scenes can and indeed *should* be cut in order to increase emotional impact, economy and comprehensibility. Christian Heinrich Schmid writes of *Der Hofmeister* "Die außerwesentlichen Unregelmäßigkeiten nicht zu rechnen, bezeugt dies die große Kenntniß von der Natur der Leidenschaften…", and wishes only that the "vortrefflichen Ganzen" had "etwas mehr Einheit des Interesse, würde manche überflüßige Person weggestrichen," while still wholeheartedly recommending the play, concluding "dem dies Stück noch unbekannt sein sollte ein, hier Nahrung des Geistes zu geniessen, wie er in hundert Erziehungsbüchern und tausend Schauspielen vergebens suchen wird" ("Der Hofmeister" 42). Schmid is less charitable in his assessment of *Der Neue Menoza*, saying in comparison to *Hofmeister* "ein gutes Ganze kann man dieses Stück noch viel weniger nennen," that the number of "dissentirenden und abentheuerlichen Stellen" has increased markedly and as a result, "Das interesse ist hier noch weniger durchgeführt und erhalten" ("Der neue Menoza" 43). He ends with the damning conclusion that "selbst die Pläne der Engländer sind gegen die seinigen regelmäßig." "Engländer" here is code

for the English style of playwriting, particularly that of Shakespeare, which famously operated outside of the Aristotelian model.

The same split between the assessment of the content and form can be seen in an anonymous review of *Die Soldaten*, published in 1776 in the *Hallische Gelehrte Zeitung*. The reviewer thrilled at the visceral, horrifying depiction of mankind's fallen state, which one cannot argue "daß sie im geringsten übertrieben wären," and that in general the whole piece is dominated "überaus viel Wahrheit und Darstellung lebendiger Natur (wärs doch nicht Natur!)" ("Leipzig" 411). In general, the reviewer sees the bucking of tradition as an emancipatory gesture: "Uebrigens ist es ganz wieder in dem mit Macht Mode werdenden Ton von Theatersachen einer gewissen Schule, die Fesseln der Regel abgeworfen hat, und denen freylich bis zur Pedanterey gemißbrauchten Einheiten Trotz geboten hat." The "gewissen Schule" indicated here is clearly the Sturm und Drang group centered in Strasbourg, and the unities which had been driven to "pedantic extremes" are the Aristotelian unities of time, location and action which had been adopted by French classical theatre, producing a feeling of acceleration "Alles geschieht in unglaublicher und unmöglicher Geschwindigkeit..." The change is not entirely for the better, however, as the reviewer notes that this style is also suspiciously easier to construct "So ists z.B. ungleich leichter ein Schauspiel in 5 Aufzügen zu schreiben, in welchem zwey bis drey Begebenheiten zur eigentlichen Sache nicht gehören, und des Plans unbeschadet... weggestrichen werden könnten, --als alles so zu verbinden, daß keine einzige Scene entbehrlich in dem Ganzen sey..." The reviewer then continues in the subjunctive "Aber man sagt uns das sey Shakespearisch-- und Schakespear soll doch ein grosser Mann gewesen sey," indicating the Sturm und Drang hero with healthy skepticism.

Other reviews similarly make reference to the emancipatory gesture of shattering the Aristotelian ideals; an anonymous review published in the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen*, the more or less official organ of Sturm und Drang, described *Hofmeister* in predictably glowing terms; after describing the play as a real-page turner (and likely to cause far fewer yawns than its French counterparts)[23], the reviewer writes "Aber ein Dichter muß auch hinreissen, der frey ist von dem Aengstlichen, dem Gepräge derer, welche schwitzen und arbeiten unter einem harten drückenden Joch, unter einer Sklaverey, die Herz und Brust enge macht, das Gefühl endlich gar tödtet und die Wurzel des Geistes"[24] ("Der Hofmeister oder Vortheile" 490). The reviewer suggests that "der beleyrne Masstab Aristotelis und seiner ihn noch mehr erschwerenden Anbeter" has deadened the senses of playwrights who would follow their example. By contrast, Lenz, free from the "Zentnerlast" of Aristotle's unities, "[läßt] sich nicht schrecken… wenn der Strom seines Genies überströmt," grasping into the "in die mannigfaltige Natur" which he represents such that "wir ihren Vertrauten beym ersten Blick erkennen! Und dann den Menschen in seinem wahren Wesen, in allen seinen Lagen uns so giebt, daß wir innigst mit ihm fühlen und laut sagen: Er ist uns unser Bruder!" (489, 490). For the reviewer of the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen*, the rhapsodic, emotional outbursts of the genius and his ability to convey nature and the nature of mankind, are synonymous. This allows the reviewer to jump with Lenz from scene to scene without worrying about how all the disparate pieces fit together, "Was kümmerts uns andre, die wir der Natur huldigen?" In

[23] It is worth noting that even this positive review describes the play in terms of *reading* and not *viewing*: even its staunchest advocates perceived it as a literary work, and not a play.
[24] The formulation of the yoke of the Aristotelian form is interesting because it was used almost verbatim in Schmid's review of Goethe's *Clavigo* "Als ein Meister, dem jede Form gleich gilt, hat sich Herr Göthe hier unter das Joch der Regelmässigkeit geschmiegt, ohne daß man ängstlichen Zwang bemerkte." This will be of continued relevance in the discussion of the distinction Lenz created between comedy and tragedy.

all the figures of the play, and in all of their situations, the reviewer sees only the truth reflected, the same truth seen by the author "Dies sah der Verfasser, und stellte es seinen Mitbrudern zum Gemälde dar, worinnen sie sich gewiß erkennen werden -- Menschen und Weltkenntnis ist durchs ganze Stück verbreitet" (491). The fact "Daß es oft so geht und gehen wird," coupled with the emotional truth of the genius outburst thereby neatly sidesteps the problem of internal coherence altogether: the truth is to be found in the fragment and not in the whole.

Christoph Martin Wieland is much less forgiving in his assessment. He begins by stating "Unsre Dramenschreiber haben das Romantische schon zu sehr in unsre Schauspiele gebracht, als daß wir nöthig hätten, unsre Lustspiele so unwahrscheinlich zu machen, als wir das Trauerspiel wahrscheinlich zu machen suchen" ("Der neue Menoza" 241). The subject of the genre classification of Lenz's plays will be discussed at length below in the section "The Comedy of the Everyday;" of interest now is Wieland's criticism of what he describes as the "improbability"[25] of the play, something he attributes to the adverse influence of Shakespeare "Was Schakespearn auch in seinen Komödien aus den Novellen anklebt, sollte nicht nachgeahmt werden, wie es hier geschehen ist." What Wieland is addressing in those passages others had referred to as "abentheurlich," "dissenterienden," "unnatürlich" or "abschweifend:" "Der Verfasser hat seine Abentheuer ganz selbst erfunden," something Wieland contends is not as laudable as it was in Shakespeare's day. Even the enthusiastic reviewer from the *Frankfurter gelehrte*

[25] The maintenance of illusion and with it the "Wahrscheinlichkeit" of a play was still considered by many to be the highest ideal of play writing. The centrality of the classical "unities" of the play were also linked to this standard--plays had traditionally been staged outdoors, at night, and some of the limitations imposed on the form were an attempt to respect the material setting of the play.

Anzeigen was forced to voice his disquiet over one particular innovation, namely the castration scene in *Hofmeister*:

> Wir sehen nicht ab, warum sich der Mensch so ganz ohne Noth und Erwartung kombabisirt. Freylich sagt ihm Wenzeslaus… wie gut es sey, der Liebe nicht zu pflegen, Auch giebts zwischen ihm und der Lise zu einer guten Scene Anlaß. Aber doch sehen wir den Menschen lieber unverstümmelt, vornehmlich an so wesentlichen Theilen. ...vielleicht dachte der Verf. an den Grundsatz, man müste an dem Glied, gestraft werden, womit man gesündigt hat. ("Der Hofmeister" 492)

The anonymous reviewer here expresses very similar concerns to Wieland: the castration (beyond being rather unpleasant) seems both improbable and poorly supported within the context of the play. Because the plays of Lenz were not perceived as unified wholes, internally coherent such that "keine einzige Scene entbehrlich in dem Ganzen sey," each scene can be judged individually, and if deemed offensive, unnatural, improbable, discarded, leading to Wieland's peculiar but telling recommendation:

> Ich glaube seinen Lesern den besten Rath zu geben, wenn ich sie bitte, nur eine Scene auf einmal, und nie das Ganze zu lesen. Für einige bizarre und unnatürliche werden sie dann desto mehrere finden, wobey ihr Verstand, ihr Herz, und ihr Zwerchfell den heilsamen Anstoß erhalten, der zu neuen Bemerkungen in der moralischen Welt, zu grösserer Empfindsamkeit, und zu besserer Laune geneigt macht.

Hofmeister is a powerful medicine, good for the heart and mind, known to improve "Empfindsamkeit und Laune," but not without "bizzare und unnatürliche" side effects, and as such, should only be taken as prescribed, namely one scene at a time. Wieland's suggested reading regimen serves as an index for contemporary reception of Lenz's

works as a whole; whether one believed the form augmented or hindered the realistic and detailed characters portrayed within, Lenz's plays were viewed as a loose collection of thought, either haphazard reflections or outbursts of true genius, a bouquet arranged in no particular order and from which one could pick and choose those elements deemed informative or insightful, while leaving behind those which unsettle due to their poor taste, strangeness, banality, or violence. By adhering, either explicitly or implicitly, to the belief that form and content were distinct from one another, the reviewers failed to recognize that the very verisimilitude for which they praised the human figures in his plays were the direct result of the fractured form. It is only within the chaotic, breaking, ruptured form that the reality of the disenfranchised subjects of the plays could find expression, and as such the form was responding to the demands of the diverse populace it sought to represent, as will be explored below.

II. Theoretical Reception: Rhapsodic or Incomprehensible "Rothwelsch?"

This, however, was explicitly contrary to Lenz's intent and expectations. Lenz was so dismayed by the reception of his plays in general, and Wieland's review of *Menoza* in particular (who he refers to angrily as the "gewöhnlicher" or "nirgends autorisierter Richter") , that he put himself in the "awkward" position of writing his own review, "Rezension des Neuen Menoza; von dem Verfasser selbst auf gesetzt." He begins by defending himself from what he perceives as an accusation of "Unmündigkeit," which he describes as:

> Ich nenne einen Menschen unmündig, der von seinen Handlungen nicht Rechnschaft zu geben im Stande ist, und da andre mit ihrem Selbst zu sehr

> beschäftigt sind, mir diesen doch nicht unverdienten Dienst zu erweisen, so muß ich freilich selber hinter dem Vorhang hervorgehn, und meinem deutschen Vaterlande dartun, daß ich mit andern unberufnen Schmierern ihm wenigstens nicht beschwerlich worden bin. (Rezension 699)

One difficulty which emerges in reading Lenz's theoretical writings is the double meaning of "Handlung" in German as either "action" or "plot." In this case interpretation is simplified since they are one and the same; a justification of Lenz's actions is simultaneously a justification of the organizing logic of his plays. The definition of immaturity provided here is a person who is unable to give account for their actions--which in Lenz's case are the actions portrayed on stage--forcing him to go "behind the curtain" (of both his mind and play) and reveal his internal rationale. His specific concern is to disabuse "neuauftretende Dramenschreiber," in both the "Welt und Nachwelt," of the notion that "ich habe mich von den Einflüssen eines glücklichen oder unglücklichen Ohngefährs blindlings regieren lassen, nieder zu schreiben was mir in die Feder kam" (699-700). The majority of Lenz's defense in "Rezension" stays at the thematic level, answering Wieland and others' accusation that the events and characters portrayed were "improbable." And while Lenz does address at length Wieland's derisive classification of *Menoza* as a "Mischspiel," and not a comedy (See below "Society as Comedy of the Unfree"), he says little about the unusual structure of the play, with one exception: "Deutlicher hätt ich in der Erzählung der Umstände sein können… wenn ich nicht überhaupt alle Erzählungen auf dem Theater haßte…. Ich möchte immer gern der geschwungnen Phantasei des Zuschauers auch was zu tun und zu vermuten übrig lassen, und ihm nicht alles erst vorkäuen." (702-703) This passage hints at an organizing principle hiding behind the apparent chaos, but stops short of explaining what that

principle could be. Lenz assures the public that, contrary to Wieland's assertion, *Menoza* is not "ganz selbst erfunden," or in Lenz's words "aus der Luft gegriffen." Lenz describes his process as positioning the hero, Prinz Tandi, "Ein Mensch, der alles, was ihm vorkommt, ohne Absichten schätzt" against "gewöhnliche Menschen meines Jahrhunderts abstechen," ordinary people to whom he merely applies "eine Verstärkung eine Erhöhung" in order to make their "Alltagscharakter" interesting for the stage. That during Tandi's search in Germany for "Wahrheit, Größe und Güte," he finds little of value is therefore not an invention of Lenz, but rather an uncomfortable reflection of the current state of Germany--something Lenz is confident the audience would have realized, "sobald das Publikum sich nur Zeit nimmt, oder ihm Zeit gelassen wird darüber nachzudenken," with the clear implication that this time for reflection had at least in part been stymied by the overly hasty critical condemnation (700, 701). "Ich kann dafür nichts, wenn andre im Grafen Camäleon einen unnatürlichen Bösewicht zu finden glauben, da wir doch Dichtungen dieser Art in der neusten Geschichte unsrer Tage überall… durch die Erfahrung häufig bestätigt finden. Glaubt man etwa, ich habe aus der Luft gegriffen, was bei mir halbe Authentizität eines Geschichtschreibers ist? (701)" Ideally, the experience offered by *Menoza* and his other plays would not function as a "Verzückungen in willkürliche Träume" for those who find waking life troubling, but rather confrontation with "Dichtungen" not of Lenz, but of *current events*, allowing Lenz to position himself as possessing the "halbe Authentizität eines Geschichtschreibers."

But what about the other half, that is, the half which had not been lifted from newspaper headlines? That is, even if one allows that the characters and events are merely artful exaggerations of reality designed to hold audience interest, this still does nothing to explain the overarching form of the play which was the primary source of

consternation. What was preventing Lenz from telling a traditional story, one which adhered to the classical ideals of unity of time, place and action? Lenz directly references Wieland's accusation that, in comparison with *Menoza*, "selbst die Pläne der Engländer sind gegen die seinigen regelmäßig," but his explanation is somewhat cryptic, suggesting that "In einem Stück, wo der Hauptheld höchst romantisch ist, muß alles übrige mit ihm nicht zu sehr absetzen, oder die Ganze Harmonie schreit" (702). In other words, something about the nature of the hero must necessarily bend the surrounding reality--and more strangely still, Lenz argues that this, too, is not a purely artistic invention, but rather a phenomenon which at least has a corollary in reality "Wir finden sogar in dem natürlichen Lauf der Dinge eine gewisse Übereinstimmung, einen Zusammenstoß seltsamer und außerorderlicher Begebenheiten, das auch das Sprichwort veranlaßt hat: kein Unglück kommt je allein." While here Lenz is once again more concerned with the "Wahrscheinlichkeit" of the events themselves, be it individually or in concert, than he is in explaining their arrangement or his hatred of "Erzählungen," the suggestion that a harmony necessarily exists between the character and the "Begebenheiten" is important, and suggests a connection to Lenz's most famous theoretical work, "Anmerkung übers Theater," a piece published in 1774 as a supplement to Lenz's translation of Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost." As will soon be explored in greater detail, one of the central tenets of "Anmerkung" was that the structure of a theatrical piece must bend to the unity of the central acting character, and the proximity of the argument presented in "Rezension des Neuen Menoza" is unsurprising, since "Rezension" was written to defend both *Menoza* and "Anmerkung" from the ire of Wieland's quill. For while Wieland's critique of *Menoza* had been sharp, his review of "Anmerkung" was eviscerating, to the extent that it provoked Goethe to

state in a letter to Johanna Fahlmer “Wieland ist und bleibt ein Sch – kerl *vid. pag. 96*, Beygehenden Merkurii.” After all, Wieland still recommended *Menoza* to the reading public, albeit in altered form, making his review more charitable than that of Schmid. By contrast, Wieland could not heap enough derision on “Anmerkung.”

Before examining Wieland’s critique, it is necessary to provide context of what was an ongoing discussion of “Anmerkung” within the *Teutsche Merkur.* “Anmerkung” was first mentioned by Schmid in 1774, in an overview of the German “Parnasses” in which he detailed the latest and best publications and attributed them to various “schools.”[26] Within this context, “Anmerkung” is described extremely briefly and neutrally; as was common with Lenz’s early publications, all of which were published anonymously by Weygand, Schmid attributed the work to Goethe and described it as “Sein dramatisches Glaubensbekenntniß… worin er alle Regeln der Bühne darauf reducirt… auf die Darstellung des Menschen” (182). Schmid then uses the recently published *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* as an illuminating example of this principle, despite not being a theater piece[27], stating “Werther redet darinnen immer selbst, und alle Scenen seines Lebens sind uns so täuschend vor Augen gestellt, als es je auf der Bühne geschehen kann. Selten ist in der That ein Charakter nach allen seinen Nuancen so ausgemahlt, selten in einem Romane die Rührung so weit getrieben wordern.”[28] Following his brief but positive review of *Werther*, Schmid turns to Lenz, who has been

[26] Schmid simultaneously questioned the reality of these factions within the German literary public, attributing them instead primarily to “die Rotten der Journalisten” (168).
[27] Schmid thereby tacitly recognizes a fluidity between media forms, a fluidity which authors like Goethe and Lenz would push to and perhaps beyond their limits.
[28] The passage continues “Solche Arbeiten sind unstreitig verdienstlicher, als Einfälle von der Art, wie Hr. Göthe in einer splenetischen Stunde hatte, *Götter, Helden und Wieland* zu kontrastieren; worüber der Merkur bereits das Nöthige gesagt hat,” referencing the ongoing feud between members of the Straßburger Sozietät and the *Teutsche Merkur*.

busily supporting “Göthens dramat. Grundsätze mit Beyspielen,” specifically mentioning both *Hofmeister* and *Menoza*, thereby connecting “Anmerkung” and Lenz’s theatrical works even despite the mistaken identity, and recognizing that they represented a substantiation of the theory presented within. These plays are reviewed in a manner which should now be familiar: “Bey vielen einzelnen vortreflichen Scenen und Zügen vermißt man in beyden eine gute Anlage des Ganzen” (183). In general, however, the impression is quite positive and Schmid compares Lenz favorably with Goethe, although not entirely without ambivalence, writing:

> Mit gleich großer Lebhaftigkeit gebohren, mit gleich starken oder fast noch stärkern Hange zum Sonderbaren, mit gleich emsigen Beobachtungsgeiste, mit gleich fleißiger Lectüre der Briten, mit wenigerer Natur im Audruck der Leidenschaften und Ausbildung der Charactere, aber mit reicherem Humor im Komischen, hat er das Lustspiel auf eben die Art reformirt, wie Göthe das Trauerspiel.

Again, Lenz’s talents for observation and successful aping of Shakespeare are lauded, while at the same time gently chastising the works for their unnaturalness and propensity for the bizarre. Schmid ends by noting that imitators of the two are rare, “unstreitig, weil man in ihrer Manier ohne ihre Talente unmöglich Glück machen kann,” implying an identity between their genius and the form of their artistic productions.

Schmid would write once more about “Anmerkung” in *Teutsche Merkur* the following year in a formal review. This time he correctly attributes the work to Lenz, but the tone has cooled: Schmid argues that it is “sehr zu wunschen... daß sie von unsern dramatischen Dichtern beherzigt werden mögen” before continuing “wenn der Verfasser gleich nicht der erste ist, der sie ihnen ans Herz legt” (“Anmerkung übers Theater” 94).

As before, Schmid commends the renewed focus on the character of the protagonist within the play, but this time characterizes Lenz as merely one of many "Bildstürmer" who have chosen to attack French theater after Lessing's letter on the subject, published already in 1759 in *Briefe die Neueste Litteratur betreffend*. How accurate this accusation is will be explored in greater detail below: for now it is important to note that, according to Schmid, the only "innovation" Lenz is responsible for is the essay's form, a form which renders it almost incomprehensible:

> Zu grösserer Gemeinnützigkeit dieser Anmerkungen wäre zu wünschen, daß der Verfasser nicht mit der täglich überhand nehmenden Sucht behaftet wäre, eine Schreibart zu affectiren, die mit dem Styl der besten Autoren aller Zeiten und Völker den widrigsten Absatz macht, und den meisten Lesern, die man doch belehren will, entweder ganz unverständlich ist, oder nur verworrene, schwankende und schielende Vorstellungen giebt, woraus sie nicht klug werden können.

Not only did "Anmerkung" not advocate anything new that Lessing had not already proposed over a decade prior, the annoying abundance of "mißlungenen Bonmots und sonderbaren neuen Wörtern" and the bizarre "Schreibart" are bound to make the piece incomprehensible to those for whom it is presumably intended.

It is the thread of incomprehensibility that Wieland picks up with even greater vehemence in his famously-vicious "Zusatz des Herausgebers" which immediately followed Schmid's review. "Zusatz" itself is not so much a review as it is an angry (and, as Lenz points out, unsolicited) outburst over the perceived arrogance of the young theoretician: "Der Verfasser der A.ü.Th. mag heißen wie er will, traun: der Kerl ist 'n Genie, und hat blos für Genien, wie er ist, geschrieben, wiewohl Genien nichts solches

nöthig haben. Soll ihm dies aber nicht erlaubt gewesen seyn? Durft er doch schreiben, was gar niemand, was er selbst nicht verstunde!" (96). As indicated by this initial passage, Wieland picks up Schmid's implicit question, for whom is "Anmerkung" intended? and provides a resounding answer: no one. Geniuses could possibly understand it (even if Lenz himself does not), but they have no need for the information, and "Fürs Publikum ist so was freylich nicht. Denn was soll dies damit machen? Wie soll es dem Genie seine Räthsel errathen? oder ergänzen, was der geheimnißreiche Mann nur halb sagt? oder ihm in seinen Geniesprüngen von Klippe zu Klippe nachsetzen?" Just as in Lenz's plays, the problem fragmentation arises once again: things are left half said, his writing is likened to a riddle, one which jumps precipitously from cliff to cliff. Wieland, like Schmid, ascribes this to mere affectation, a posture and a particular tone artificially created by Lenz "Sein Ton ist ein so fremder Ton, seine Sprache ein so wunderbares Rothwelsch… Sein Ton ist nicht der Ton der Welt; es ist auch nicht der Ton der Untersuchung; Schulton ist's auch nicht; Kenner haben sonst auch noch nie so gesprochen. Was ist's den? Es ist der Ton eines Sehers, der Gesichte sieht." As a staunch advocate of the Enlightenment and rationality, to compare Lenz's writing with the dark mutterings of a prophet is the greatest slight Wieland could have offered. As such, Lenz has been found guilty of actively working against the good of humankind by intentionally obfuscating his own of a lack of knowledge with mystical language. In order to make this "Büchlein" intelligible, Wieland argues it would be necessary to write another, much longer book, "[um] verständlich zu machen, zu prüfen, das Korn von der Spreu zu scheiden, und zu zeigen, was darinn gesunde Kritik, und was eitel schaales Persiflage ist, was würklich neugedacht, und was nur durch die Affectation seltsamer Wendungen, Wortfiguren und Nothzüchtigung der Sprache den Schein einer unerhörten

Entdeckung bekommen hat." But Wieland asks who would write such a work? And once written, who would read it, given "Andre das lange vorher kürzer, deuthlicher und richtiger gesagt haben," before directing his readers to an article published a full year before "Anmerkung" by an author who already knew the value of Shakespeare's writing and extolled it in a much shorter and more accessible piece, "Der Geist von Shakespeare" (the author of that article is, by chance, Wieland himself).

The anonymous reviewer of "Anmerkung" in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* brings the untraditional form of "Anmerkung" into even sharper focus:

> Der Verf. dieser Anmerkungen giebt sie selbst für nichts weiter als Rhapsodien aus; dieß entschuldigt einigermassen den Mangel ihres Zusammenhangs, wenn dieser Mangel sich nur nicht auch auf die einzelnen Gedanken, auf die Sätze und Meinungen, und sogar auf die Einkleidung erstreckte, die wir noch in keiner Schrift so seltsam, und beynahe närrisch, gefunden haben. ("XX. Anmerkungen über Theater" 377)

What Lenz characterizes as "rhapsodic," the reviewer sees as unfinished, insufficiently contemplated ramblings, leading to a bizarre essay which borders on foolish. The history of theater which Lenz provides at the beginning is "mehr spöttisch als wahr" and his critique of Aristotle is rejected wholesale before even addressing the individual elements, as Lenz "Sagt… doch selbst, daß er ihn noch nicht ganz durchgelesen hat!" (378). Lenz claims that Aristotle cites two sources of poetry, but only provides "Nachahmung," keeping the other hidden behind his beard, demonstrating that he "nicht einmal das vierte Kapitel… ganz durchgelesen hat," in which rhythm and harmony are revealed as the second source. Instead Lenz preposterously suggests that the second source is the ability to take concepts apart "[sie] durchzuschauen, sie anschaulich und gegenwärtig zu

machen," which the review claims is merely another way of describing mimesis. Similarly, Lenz's contention that Aristotle, by placing the plot as the highest good, necessarily sacrifices the agency of his characters (as will be explored further below), is waved away as mere sophistic wordplay. Throughout, the reviewer is trapped between the urge to dismiss Lenz's essay out of hand, and the need to rectify the slights done to Aristotle and others. Beginning "Ohne uns hier darauf näher einzulassen," the reviewer cites several passages from Aristotle's poetics intended to show the true relationship between character and plot, concluding "Die Natur hat freylich nicht den Aristoteles um Rath gefragt, wenn sie ein Genie schaffen wollte; aber Aristoteles fragte die Natur um Rath, als er seine Regeln schuf; und so wurden sie, nach Pope's Ausdruck, *methodisirte Natur*" (381). As such, the unities of time and space, the singular plot arch continued to be followed, "nicht, weil es Aristoteles so wollte, sondern weil die Natur der Sache es so will, die er auch hier zu Rathe zog." The reviewer is forced to admit that when it comes to Lenz's derision of French theater, he was "naseweis genug" to get some of it right, although everything has been said before and better, with Lenz's critique bordering on cruelty. The reviewer, like Schmid and Wieland, is baffled as to why this work is attached to a translation of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*: while Shakespeare is recognized here, too, as shorthand for a-classical genius, but why *this* play, which experts (Wieland) have deemed to be one of Shakespeare's worst? How does this demonstrate his theory? But throughout, it is the form of the work which most irritates:

> Soll es Neuheit, oder Sonderbarkeit, oder Originalität seyn, oder ist es vorsetzlich Flüchtigkeit und Ungedult, wenn der Verf. sich oft nicht Zeit läßt, seine Gedanken ganz heraus zu sagen, oft kaum den Voedersatz einer Periode ganz hinschreibt,

und den Nachsatz, oder doch einen Theil desselben, mit einem blossen Strich andeutet, und es dem Leser überläßt, sich denselben hinzuzudenken? (377)

The reviewer is convinced that it is clearly the result of "Flüchtigkeit und Dreistigkeit," which must necessarily produce "ungeduld" on the side of the "Publicum," who will undoubtedly grow "unwillig" with Lenz's bizarre writing style, particularly when this style seems to purely be a result of the "Verworrenheit, die in dem Gehirn eines solchen Schriftstellers geherrscht zu haben scheint." As an example of this confusion, the review quotes one of Lenz's most remarkable outbursts in "Anmerkung:" "Alles übrige halb verdaute Geschwätz des Verf. über diese Sache beyseite gesetzt, welches er mit den Worten schließt: 'Wollte sage -- was wolt ich doch sagen?' -- -- Möcht' hinzusetzt Verfasserchen! wustest's wohl nicht!" The parallel critiques of Lenz's theoretical and theatrical writings is apparent. In both cases, reviewers perceive what they hold to be natural truths buried under a form which seems utterly arbitrary. Though if anything, the ire of the contemporary critique had increased, as people were more able to concede what they saw as artistic license in creative works--what possible reason, other than arrogance and a misguided understanding of genius, could there be for the same rupture, fragment and confusion in a purely explanatory work? Why not impart the information simply, directly? The following section will explore the theoretical foundations for Lenz's chosen writing form, linking it to a perceived tension between the free-will of the individual and impositions from the external material, social world.

III. Towards a Theory of Theatre: Unity of Person, Unity of Idea

So what was "Anmerkung"? Was it, as Wieland and Schmid suggested, merely a commonsensical plea for a heightened focus on the person of the protagonist cloaked in

mystical flimflam? Was it the jumbled ramblings of a young pretender, someone who didn't have the faintest understanding of Aristotle or the nature of theater? Even Heinrich Leopold Wagner's glowing review of "Anmerkung" in the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* does little to dissuade from this interpretation, as it apes the grammatical style of "Anmerkung" while remaining substantively empty: "Ein sehr vollwichtiger Beytrag zur Dramaturige!-- tiefdurchdachte Einsichten in die Kunst! ächtes warmes Gefühl des Schönen! anschauend dargestellt! in jedem Zuge die Hand eines Meister kennbar!--" (Wagner 796). Seemingly every sentence ends in an exclamation mark or a dash and the review is rife with overblown metaphors comparing Lenz to a colossus among mental midgets, while never describing *how* Lenz achieves this feat, or *what*, exactly, the overall effect is. In fact, the anonymous reviewer leaves the odious task of creating an "allgemeines Raisonnement" or a collection of "einzelne schöne Stellen" to the likes of Wieland, referencing the 1773 essay "Der Geist Shakespeares" in which Wieland attempts to summarize Shakespeare's genius, to which was attached a sort of greatest-hits of quotes from Shakespeare's plays.[29] Instead, the reviewer contents themself with the imperative "--Willst noch näher mit dem Werkchen bekannt werden? gut! geh und lies es selbst**,** es wird dich warlich nicht reuen..." I argue, however, that despite all of this and even Lenz's own positioning of the text as "rhapsodienweis" "ungehemmte Räsonnement" (and himself as an "unparteiischen Dilettanten") that in reading with and against "Anmerkung," along with a few other key essays, it is possible

[29] Already in 1773 Wieland was the much-beleaguered original translator of Shakespeare into German, for which this essay was to serve as a partial defense. People from all sides had attacked both the quality of his translations, as well as his accompanying commentaries, which often dismissed large portions of Shakespeare's work as low, poorly written, or too regionally specific to bear translation. Even the most charitable reviews tended to damn with faint praise, noting that Wieland had at least done his country a great service by making these works available at all.

to uncover a unified theory of theater specifically, and writing in general, a theory which through its fragmentation of form, allowed for new experiences and new voices of society to be made visible.

At the heart of "Anmerkung" lies a disarmingly simple question: what are plays about? "Es kommt itzt darauf an, was beim Schauspiel eigentlich der Hauptgegenstand der Nachahmung: der Mensch? oder das Schicksal des Menschen?" ("Anmerkungen" 650). As suggested already by the critique, Lenz assigns two representatives to the two different potential answers, the "Franzosen (sollen wir Griechen sagen?)," specifically Voltaire, Aristotle, Sophocles[30] on the one side and the "ältere Engländer… aller ältern nordischen Nationen" meaning Shakespeare and a later fleeting reference to Hans Sachs. Lenz then begins reconstructing Aristotle's conception of a tragedy in order to shine light on an apparent contradiction in its definition: on the one hand, Aristotle defines a tragedy as "Es ist also das Trauerspiel die Nachahmung einer Handlung, einer guten, vollkommenen und großen Handlung, in einer angenehmen Unterredung, nach der besondern Beschaffenheit der handelnden Personen abgeändert." A tragedy is the imitation of an entire action, one which has been shaped by the "besondern Beschaffenheit" of the acting individual, a Beschaffenheit which itself is the combination of the individual's "Gesinnungen und die Sitten." Lenz collapses this definition into the modern term "Charakter," and follows Aristotle to the argument's logical conclusion: "[Aristotles] fordert also, daß wir die Fabel des Stücks nach den Charakteren der

[30] It is necessary to point out how fast and loose German theorists played with French theater: Corneille and Voltaire are consistently referred to in the same breath, despite their separation by an entire century and the fundamentally different character and goals of their works. Of course, this elision pales in comparison to the constant lumping of French playwrights of the 17th and 18th century together with Sophocles--what becomes clear through this conceptual shorthand is that the German critics are far less interested in the reality of French or ancient Greek theater than they are in constructing a theoretical strawman against which to define an emergent, proto-nationalist sense of "German" theater.

handelnden Personen einrichten… ‘der Dichter solle Begebenheiten nicht vorstellen, wie sie geschehen sind, sondern geschehen sollten’” (651). In other words, the events of the play must be shaped to match the idealized results of the protagonist’s Charakter coming into contact with the described circumstances. This would seem to suggest that the answer for Aristotle to the question “what are plays about?” should be that they are about “der Mensch” rather than the “Schicksal” of the individual.

This, however, is not the case: “Nachdem er nun selbst zugestanden, daß der Charakter der handelnden Person den Grund ihrer Handlungen, und also auch der Fabel des Stücks enthalte: sollte es uns fast wundern, daß er… fortführt: ‘Das Wichtigste unter allen ist die Zusammensetzung der Begebenheiten. Denn das Trauerspiel ist nicht eine Nachahmung des Menschen, sondern der Handlungen, des Lebens, des Glücks oder Unglücks, denn die Glückseligkeit ist in den Handlungen gegründet, und der Endzweck des Trauerspiels ist eine Handlung, nicht eine Beschaffenheit.’” Aristotle makes a seemingly unintelligible distinction between a play being about the actions of an individual vs. being about the nature of the individual acting. “Er sondert immer die Handlung von der handelnden Hauptperson ab, die *bongré malgré* in die gegebene Fabel hineinpassen muß, wie ein Schiffstau in ein Nadelöhr” (655). Lenz exclaims in feigned consternation “Als ob die Beschaffenheit eines Menschen überhaupt vorgestellt werden könne, ohne ihn in Handlung zu setzen. Er ist dies und das, woran weiß ich es, lieber Freund, woran weißt du es, hast du ihn handeln sehen?” To think of the character of an individual existing outside of their actions is a contradiction of terms to the modern mind: after all, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, it is in the *doing* that a person’s true nature is believed to be revealed. How, then, to explain this split? “Die Erfahrung ist die ewige Atmosphäre des strengen Philosophen, sein Räsonnement kann

und darf sich keinen Nagelbreit drüber erheben, so wenig als eine Bombe außer ihrem berechneten Kreise fliegen kann" (652). The specific metaphor here is of note: in order to convey an unalterable fate, Lenz turns to physics. Just as it is impossible for a "Bombe" to alter its own trajectory once it has been launched, it was likewise unthinkable for a Greek hero to change the course of destiny. Lenz recognizes that within the context of ancient tragedies, to act and be acted upon were synonymous. Because the individual's character is merely the summation of their "Gesinnung und Sitten," the question as to *why* they acted in the way that they did was an uninteresting one to audiences of ancient Greece: they acted in the only way they could. The only questions which remained therefore were *what* were the circumstances which produced this action, and *how* did the person act--character is irrelevant or, to return to the physics metaphor, individual character is a constant, the circumstances surrounding that individual are the variables. "Da ein eisernes Schicksal die Handlungen der Alten bestimmte und regierte, so konnten sie als solche interessieren, ohne davon den Grund in der menschlichen Seele aufzusuchen und sichtbar zu machen." The source of the action is not to be found within the individual, but in the "eisernes Schicksal" itself; fate, the will of the gods, *is* the main character, the "handelnde" force, and consequently it is the unfolding of this fate which interests, not the inconsequential internal musings of the protagonists.

Lenz pushes this line of argumentation further, claiming that not only was it uninteresting to show the inner workings of the decision (as these were nothing but almost mechanical processes), to do so was impious; citing the religious origins of the play, Lenz noted "sie glaubten eine Ruchlosigkeit zu begehen, wenn sie Begebenheiten aus den Charakteren berechneten, sie bebten vor dem Gedanken zurück. Es war Gottesdienst, die furchtbare Gewalt des Schicksals anzuerkennen, vor seinem blinden

Despotismus hinzuzittern" (667). If the purpose of the play was to show the might of the gods, how could a demonstration of the will of humankind be deemed anything but heretical? Lenz also sees this as the necessary breaking point between ancient and modern theater: the German populace no longer believes in a pantheon of gods controlling all aspects of destiny, but rather in individuals reasoning, choosing and acting, creating their own paths, their own fate. What once was heresy has become the norm, and as a result, the fabric of theatrical works must change accordingly:

> [B]ei den alten Griechen war's die Handlung, die sich das Volk zu sehen versammlete. Bei uns ist's die Reihe von Handlungen, die wie Donnerschläge auf einander folgen, eine die andere stützen und heben, in ein großes Ganze zusammenfließen müssen, das hernach nichts mehr und nichts minder ausmacht als die Hauptperson, wie sie in der ganzen Gruppe ihrer Mithändler hervorsticht. (656)

Again, in ancient Greece, it was the Action, that is, the "Fabel" of destiny manifesting itself in the plot of the play which the people gathered to see. The plot described the inevitable downfall of the hero, destroyed by a predetermined interaction between individual character and external circumstances. For the modern audience this necessarily shifts: instead of showing the fate of an individual through a crucial event and accompanying action, it is necessary to show a *series* of actions, that is, the important choices made by the individual, which, building one upon the other, collectively *reveal* the nature of that individual's character, pushing them into stark relief over and against those of their peers. Character now matters because it has become the unifying element of the play, something which is made and remade in the moment to moment decisions of the protagonist, and not as a stable constant upon which the plot acts. Lenz

highlights this shift by completely inverting Aristotle's statement "*Fabula autem est una, non ut aliqui putant, si circa unum sit*," "the plot is not, as some believe, unified because it revolves around a person," to "*fabula est una si circa unum sit*," "the plot is unified, if it revolves around a person." "Was können wir dafür, daß wir an abgerissenen Handlungen kein Vergnügen mehr finden, sondern alt genug worden sind, ein Ganzes zu wünschen? daß wir den Menschen sehen wollen, wo jene nur das unwandelbare Schicksal und seine geheimen Einflüsse sahen. Oder scheuen Sie sich, meine Herren! einen Menschen zu sehen?" (652). In typical fashion, Lenz formulates the societal transformation he claims has occurred in the form of a challenge: surely now we are mature enough to face the world in its entirety? To see the whole, acting person, not an arbitrarily isolated moment? To see the whole person, acting, is therefore something which is simultaneously demanded *by* and *of* the audience. The (perceived) general dissatisfaction with French/Greek tragedies was an expression of this popular will of the Many, who demanded a more realistic and fully realized protagonist. Because the audience is privy to not just one, but many actions, organized not in accordance with an immutable fate but around the plastic Charakter of the protagonist, they recognize themselves in the play, as individuals shaped by the decisions they have made and will make. But there is also a clear pedagogical thrust to the argumentation: it is not just a matter of showing the audience how people do act, but also how they could and should act. As will be discussed in Lenz's assessment of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* below, the potential of tragedies is to show the realm of the possible for the freely acting, self-determining individual, to provide a model for a different kind of human existence.

Shifting the focus from the single action revealing fate to a series of actions building a Charakter has profound implications for Aristotle's "three unities,"[31] or as Lenz lovingly referred to them, "die so erschröckliche jämmerlichberühmte Bulle" (654). Interestingly, despite his playfully mocking tone (and the vehemence of the defence mustered on Aristotle's behalf by Wieland and others), Lenz never implies that Aristotle was wrong, but that these unities have simply lost their meaning, or at the very least, their meaning has changed drastically within the modern context. The three unities were merely a natural and necessary consequence of the fact that plot-as-fate was the fulcrum of ancient tragedies. They followed one "action" by definition, not an action of a single person, but a single sequence of events representing the "eisernes Schicksal." Put differently, it was not the action of the individual, but that of the gods acting upon the individual, which was of interest. Because they followed one series of events, the play was necessarily tied to one location. Lenz further notes that "Einheit des Orts -- oder möchten lieber sagen, Einheit des Chors, denn was war es anders? Kommen doch auf dem griechischen Theater die Leute wie gerufen und gebetn herbei, und kein Mensch stößt daran" (656). Location and fate are woven together in the body of the chorus: they are a reassuring presence, the audience knows through them that the people who are called to the location are meant to be there. In terms of the unity of time within tragedies, this was largely defined in distinction to historical epics: both were, quoting Aristotle, the "Nachahmung edler Handlungen mittelst einer Rede," with the distinction that a tragedy in the ideal case should occur within the course of a single day and night. Lenz notes that already in ancient theater this distinction seems rather arbitrary, and that from a

[31] It is worth noting that while the "three unities" were postulated by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, they were not codified into a specific benchmark of theater until the neoclassical era.

certain perspective, the 10 years which *The Iliad* spanned could also be described as detailing a "single event."[32]

By suggesting that Aristotle's *Poetics* were a product of their time and not immutable, eternal laws, Lenz closely parallels the theory laid out by Johann Gottfried Herder in the 1773 essay "Shakespeare," published in *Von Deutscher Art und Kunst*.[33] In "Shakespeare," Herder argues that the problem with the dramatic "rules" taken from Aristotle is the result of a fundamental misunderstanding:

> [D]as künstliche ihrer Regeln war -- keine Kunst! war Natur! -- Einheit der Fabel -- war Einheit der Handlung, die vor ihnen lag; die nach ihren Zeit, Vaterlands, Religions, Sittenumständen, nicht anders als solch ein Eins seyn konnte. Einheit des Orts war Einheit des Orts; denn die Eine, kurze feierliche Handlung ging nur an Einem Ort, im Tempel, Pallast, gleichsam auf einem Markt des Vaterlandes vor. (Herder 77)

The rules which Aristotle derived from the plays of his time were nothing more than the dictates of nature imposing its will on mimetic production. The unity of plot, the unity of time, the unity of place all found their origins not in artificial precepts, but in playwrights attempting to mirror the reality which confronted them. "Alle das zeigt, daß der grosse Mann [Aristotle], auch im grossen Sinn seiner Zeit philosophirte:" that the rules no longer

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[32] This is an interesting assertion, as when viewed in this light, the *Iliad* differs from *Agamemnon* in scale rather than in quality: it is the unfolding tragedy of an entire people, as well as many specific individuals caught in the wake of the Trojan War. This act of scaling is ever present, with the point of focus constantly shifting between armies of thousands, crashing against each other like waves of the ocean, to surreally quiet moments in which two heroes meet their fate in the midst of the roiling chaos of battle, or in the litany of ships vs. Achilles' lamentations by the sea. A History is therefore not the record of the will and action of a single God, but of the interaction of many and the inevitable fallout this creates. In this, it is also possible to see why this distinction would be considered "natural," as the tragedy of multiple nations could be considered an event of a scale impossible to depict on the stage.

[33] Although published a year earlier, it is likely that Lenz conceived and wrote "Anmerkung" in 1770 before having access to "Shakespeare."

fit, and should not be made to fit modern theatrical productions, is not a failing of Aristotle, but rather a function of temporal transience (81):

> Wie sich Alles in der Welt ändert: so muste sich auch die Natur ändern, die eigentlich das griechische Drama schuf. Weltverfassungen, Sitten, Stand der Republicken, Tradition der Heldenzeit, Glaube, selbst Musik, Ausdruck, Maas der Illusion wandelte und natürlich schwand auch Stoff zu Fabeln, Gelegenheit zu der Bearbeitung, Anlaß zu dem Zweck. (81-82)

The nature of Nature has changed: every aspect of society, every tradition, moral norm, mode of expression. And while it is possible to export the foreign rules of a different time and people onto modern creative endeavors, as the "new Athenians" (the French playwrights) do, this inevitably will not reproduce the essence of Greek theater, "weil im innern nichts von ihm Dasselbe mit Jenem ist, nicht Handlung, Sitten, Sprache, Zweck, nichts" (84). The results are "Gemälde der Empfindung von dritter fremder Hand," nothing like the "ersten ungeschminkten Regungen" which were, after all, the "natural" expression of the world as it once existed.

What a modern playwright should strive for instead, is to create a new theater, one which establishes the same *kind* of connection to the world that existed in the great Greek plays, but instead follows "seiner Geschichte, nach Zeitgeist, Sitten, Meinungen, Sprache, Nationalvorurtheile, Traditionen und Liebhabereyen, wenn auch aus Fastnachts- und Marionettenspiel (eben, wie die delen Griechen aus dem Chor) erfinden -- und das Erfundne wird Drama seyn bey diesem Volk dramatischen Zweck erreicht" (88). It is important to note the range of the elements included by Herder, ranging from the classical ideals such as history (the stories of the great, of heroes) down to "Liebhabereyen," as well as "low" forms of culture such as "Fastnachts- und

Marionettenspiel." Herder argues that it is this, Shakespeare's ability to fuse all elements of his world into a new dramatic form, which describes his genius:

> [Shakespeare] fand keinen so einfachen Volks- und Vaterlandscharakter, sondern ein Vielfaches von Ständen, Lebensarten, Gesinnungen, Völkern und Spracharte… er dichtete also Stände und Menschen, Völker und Spracharten, König und Narren, Narren und König zu dem herrlichen Ganzen! Er fand keinen so einfachen Geist der Geschichte, der Fabel, der Handlung: er nahm Geschichte, wie er sie fand, und setzte mit Schöpfergeist das Verschiedenartigste Zeug zu einem Wunderganzen zusammen, was wir, wenn nicht Handlung im griechischen Verstande, so Aktion im Sinne der mittlern, oder in der Sprache der neuern Zeiten Begebenheit grosses Eräugnis nennen wollen. [34]

Herder believes it is therefore Shakespeare, not Voltaire, whom Aristotle would have embraced as the new Sophocles, *because* he does not follow ancient precepts designed for another time, but rather creates new, naturalistic laws which better accommodate his new reality. Because society had grown vastly more complex since Sophocles' time, Shakespeare was forced to write of both kings and fools, lords and peasants. Within this context, the old rules, in particular the three unities, not only no longer described the world as it existed, if maintained nonetheless out of a sense of pious integrity, would act as a barrier to realistic/naturalistic depictions of society, producing instead stilted artifice with no resonance to the modern viewer.[35]

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[34] This description of a play's ability to capture all levels of society finds particular resonance with Garve's theory of novels, see Chapter 3: The Journalistic Form seeps into Books.

[35] The flaw in this line of reasoning is that it assumes a progressive model of society which is constantly growing in complexity from more primitive simplicity. There *were,* of course, classes/estates/slaves in ancient Greece, a social heterogeneity which also existed within the

Like Lenz, Herder offers a new foundation for the unity tragedy, but instead of the acting character of the protagonist, Herder suggests a more direct substitution; in place of the will of the Gods, i.e. fate, manifesting in a single unified event, it is the genius-author who brings order to the temporal and spatial chaos of modern existence. It is the author who is able to take the "einzelne Gepräge der Völker, Stände, Seelen! die alle die verschiedenartigsten und abgetrenntest handelnden Maschinen, alle -- was wir in der Hand des Weltschöpfers sind--unwissende, blinde Werkzeuge zum Ganzen Eines theatralischen Bildes, Einer Grösse habenden Begebenheit, die nur der Dichter überschauet" (94). Agency is, as in the ancient Greek tragedies, displaced from the figures on the stage, who are nothing but "handelnden Maschinen." It is Shakespeare himself "Der hundert Auftritte einer Weltbegebenheit mit dem Arm umfaßt, mit dem Blick ordnet, mit der Einen durchhäuchenden, Alles belebenden Seele erfüllet;" in place of the "strengsten Regel" of Aristotle and a story which marches "von Einem Anfang zu Einem Ende," the audience is presented with "welch ein Wechsel von Zeiten, Umständen, Stürmen, Wetter, Zeitläuften!... tritt näher, und fühle den Menschengeist, der auch jede Person und Alter und Charakter und Nebending in das Gemälde ordnete." (96, 94). The language used is telling: it is the author's arms, the author's breathe, the author's eyes which order, animate and control the created world. This world is inseparable from the person of the author, and is "so groß und tief wie die Natur:" "die ganze Welt ist zu

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audience of the tragedy to a certain extent, even if it found no representation on the stage. This is not to argue that society has remained unchanged throughout history and that it was only the representation which has changed. The social makeup of society and nature of social stratification had unquestionably shifted drastically in the intervening millenia between Shakespeare and Sophocles, and Herder's assertion of temporal contingency of all things remains an important intervention. But social change in and of itself, specifically an absolute increase in societal complexity, is not enough to explain the change in the perception of what a thing like "society" was and who comprised it, as reflected in the new shape of theatrical production.

diesem grossen Geiste allein Körper: alle Auftritte der Natur an diesem Körper Glieder, wie alle Charaktere und Denkarten zu diesem Geiste Züge -- und das Ganze mag jener Riesengott des Spinosa ‘Pan! Universum!’ heissen.” (96, 103).

The identity between the genius author and the natural universe which is their body indicates an interesting slippage which qualifies the artist’s position as an omnipotent and omniscient god of creation. The artist is a creator only insofar as they are a “Diener der Natur,” that is, to that extent to which they successfully mimic the divine creation of God (98). Yes, the author breathes life into the dramatic world, but they do so as a medium, “Aus Scenen und Zeitlaufen aller Welt findet sich, wie durch ein Gesetz der Fatalität, eben die hieher, die dem Gefühl der Handlung, die kräftigste, die idealste ist; wo die sonderbarsten, kühnsten Umstände am meisten den Trug der Wahrheit unterstützen, wo Zeit und Ortswechsel, über die der Dichter schaltet, am lautesten rufen: ‘hier ist kein Dichter! ist Schöpfer! ist Geschichte der Welt!’” It is precisely in those moments where the creative license of the author appears at its greatest the “fatalistic” power of nature is strongest (98). The genius of the author is not a freedom from, but rather a connection to nature, a slavish devotion to its accurate depiction. The agency to be found within a play lies therefore neither in the characters themselves, nor in the author, but rather in the order of the natural world. In his discussion of Othello, Herder describes the incredible richness of the work, as all of the individual pieces come together like gears to create a miraculous whole. Shakespeare’s relationship to this whole is described as “Wenn ein Engel der Vorsehung menschliche Leidenschaften gegen einander abwog, und Seelen und Charakterer gruppirte, und ihne Anlässe, wo Jedes im Wahn des Freyen handelt, zuführt, und er sie alle mit diesem Wahne, als mit der Kette des Schicksals zu seiner Idee leitet -- so war der menschliche

Geist, der hier entwarf, sann, zeichnete, lenkte" (97). Shakespeare functions as an invisible hand,[36] not directly controlling the individual decisions of the characters on stage, but rather using his understanding of human nature to build constellations in which the characters, through exercising their "free will," act unwittingly in concert to create his "Idee," as if once again bound to an unalterable fate. In this analogy, neither the characters on the stage, nor Shakespeare, can be described as truly free: the figures, despite acting "im Wahn des Freyen," are completely predictable, merely following that course prescribed by their "menschliche Leidenschaften" and "Seelen." It is the predictability of human nature, and not artifice of the theatrical form, which allows Shakespeare to shape the course of the play, to create a work of striking verisimilitude. But this also shows the limits within Shakespeare operated; according to Herder's theory, the "Idee" which was revealed over the course of the play, and to which the individual fates of the characters were bound, could only be one already found in the world as it existed outside of the play. An author is a creator in that they are *like* God; they only create, or more accurately, re-create that which God had already made.[37]

Despite the many parallels and apparent collaboration of Herder and Lenz during this period, the issue of agency would seem to mark a sharp dividing line between the two theories, as Herder's theory leaves no space for the free-acting character, the organizing principle of Lenz's theory of tragedy. Instead, Aristotle's "eisernes Schicksal" has crept back in under the guise of Nature, God's creation. The gods may no longer dictate the fate of humankind, and although they appear to act exclusively within the

[36] For an examination of the figure of the "invisible hand" and its connection to temporality, see the discussion of Kittsteiner in Chapter 3: A new Temporality: Universal, Relative, Reflexive.
[37] This also potentially helps illuminate why Lenz was so adamant that his own plays were not arbitrary inventions but rather reflected the world as it actually existed.

"Wahn" of free will, humans collectively and individually are machines operating along predetermined parameters, not all that dissimilar from Lenz's characterization of the characters of ancient tragedies acting in accordance with a combination of "Gesinnungen und die Sitten." The figures on stage, as people, are predictable, and the genius playwright reveals this predictability to the audience as a truth of the inner life of humanity.

By contrast, in his theory of tragedy Lenz advocates an entirely different idea of free will, and with it, a new species of human. Lenz still posits a similar theory of genius, [38] namely someone who is able to describe the world with enough clarity to be able to recreate an image of it "mit allen seinen Verhältnissen, Licht, Schatten, Kolorit dazu" ("Anmerkung" 648). Like Herder, Lenz draws parallels between the creative act of generating the theatrical universe and divine creation: "der Schöpfer sieht auf ihn hinab wie auf die kleinen Götter, die mit seinem Funken in der Brust auf den Thronen der Erde sitzen und seinem Beispiel gemäß eine kleine Welt erhalten." And once again, it is the genius' heavenly perspective which the audience then shares, something which Lenz expresses in his impatience with the complaints about transgressions of time and space:

> [W]elche Wohltat des Genies, Sie auf die Höhe zu führen, wo Sie einer Schlacht mit all ihrem Getümmel, Jammern und Grauen zusehen können, ohne Ihr eigen Leben, Gemütsruhe, und Behagen hineinzuflechten… was sollen wir mehr tun, daß ihr selig werdet? wie kann man's euch bequemer Machen? Nur zuschauen, ruhen und zuschauen, mehr fordern wir nicht, warum wollt ihr denn nicht auf diesem Stern stehen bleiben, und in die Welt 'nabgucken, aus kindischer Furcht den Hals zu brechen. (655)

[38] And indeed, most likely partially derives his theory of genius from Herder's earlier texts.

But despite these similarities, it is not the genius, or even Nature through the medium of the genius, that Lenz advocates as the organizing principle of the tragic drama, but rather the character of the protagonist, a character which is revealed and formed through the active choices the protagonist makes on stage. Lenz is therefore shifting the focus of the tragedy, from the cosmic to the human, as well as advocating for a specific *kind* of protagonist, one whose character is defined by their free will, the creative force of their decisions: “Es ist hier nicht die Rede von hingekleckten Charakteren… es ist die Rede von Charakteren, die sich ihre Begebenheiten erschaffen, die selbstständig und unveränderlich die ganze großen Maschine selbst drehen, ohne die Gottheiten in den Wolken anders nötig zu haben, als wenn sie wollen zu Zuschauschern” (653). The distance to what Lenz characterizes as Aristotle’s pious observation of the will of the gods could not be greater; it is not by chance that Lenz pushes the gods into the role of passive observers. But this also indicates a significant gulf between Herder and Lenz; rather than merely appearing to act in accordance with their own free will, all the while secretly acting as “kleine Maschine” or “Räder” within the giant clockwork of Nature, Lenz inverts the cosmic order, placing the human actor in the center and allowing them to shape the natural world around them.

It is this inversion, not a vague "Gesetz der Fatalität” coalescing different times and places in the somnambulic visions of the genius, which demands a new organizational principle of the tragedy and the rejection of the three unities. Contrary to the previously cited accusations of Wieland and others, Lenz did not confuse rupture of form with genius. In his essay “Von Shakespeares Hamlet,” Lenz calls out those “junge Dichter” who believe that the beauty of Shakespeare’s writing lies in his “Unregelmäßigkeit,” comparing them to purveyors of bad wine who seek to convince

their customers that it is the room and not their head which is spinning (739). Shakespeare, he argues, recognized the value of the “Einheiten der Zeit und Orts,” and as such, deviations existed in his works only “als Ausnahme… immer nur höheren Vorteilen aufgeopfert und daß je größer die dadurch erhaltenen Vorteile waren, desto mehr Freiheit man in dem Stück dem Dichter gestatten mußte und zu gestatten kein Bedenken trug.” Through maintaining the unity of time and space, Lenz believes that the author simultaneously preserves the highest good of playwriting, audience interest. Without some level of consistency, “die Stube dreht sich,” and the task of both the actors in portraying and the audience in comprehending are made needlessly more difficult. However, it is not exclusively or even primarily through the preservation of the unities that the modern audience’s interest is awakened; again it is no longer the unity of the plot, inexorable unfurling of destiny which excites, but “Menschen” that the audience demands to see, “nicht… Bildern, nicht Marionettenpuppen, … Menschen” (“Anmerkungen” 653). And if the characterization of the protagonists demands “unausbleiblich und unumgänglich Veränderung der Zeit und des Orts - so kann und muß ihm [dem Interesse] Zeit und Ort aufgeopfert werden” (“Von Shakespeare” 739). And as it happens, the characterization of an active protagonist requires just this sacrifice, and often. This is because the character of the acting individual is not the result of a single climactic event occurring in a single time and place, but rather can be found “In jeder ihrer kleinsten Handlungen, Schicksalswechsel und Lebenstößen... In ihrer immer regen Gegenwürkung und Geistesgröße…” (“Anmerkungen” 669). For the self-determining person, every decision contributes to the whole of their character, and if the play as a medium hopes to capture this it is necessary to represent these moments,

no matter how distant from one another these moments may be in regards to time or space.

To return to the earlier quote, when Lenz complains about “abgerissenen Handlungen” in which the modern audience finds no satisfaction, he is suggesting that it is not his plays or those of other Sturm und Drangers, such as Goethe, which suffer from fragmentation and incomprehensibility, but rather those modern dramas which continue to adhere to the classical unities even though the nature of the world and people has changed. These plays are “abgerissen” in the sense that by arbitrarily limiting the scope of the action to a single day, a single location, and a single primary act, they have ripped the acting character from all context. The audience sees an action, but doesn’t know why, has no sense of the thousands of other smaller actions which have led to this moment, leading to dissatisfaction “Wir... hassen solche Handlungen, von denen wir die Ursache nicht einsehen, und nehmen keinen Teil dran” (“Anmerkung” 652).” So long as the acting person is anchoring the events portrayed, the audience has no difficulties following a skipping, twisting narrative; in fact, it is first then that a play becomes comprehensible. As a negative example, Lenz has sharp words for the recent play, *L'Honnête Criminel* by Fenouillot de Falbaire, criticizing the strict adherence to the unities of time and place at the cost of intelligibility: “Ich sehe die Sache vor mir, aber ich begreife nicht wie sie zugegangen ist... lauter Konklusionen ohne Prämissen” (“Von Shakespeares” 742). Lenz is convinced that, like him, the modern audience would “zehnmal lieber Zeit und Ort aufgeopfert [sehen]” rather than sacrifice “meine Sinnlichkeit auf Unkosten meines gänzlichen Verstandes” (742). Lenz’s argument at its core rests upon audience expectations and demands, both of which he contends have shifted radically since the time of Aristotle. The modern audience has matured in some

significant way, they are “alt genug” that the nature of their interests as well as their perceptive abilities have changed. “Woher das Zutrauen zu der Einbildungskraft seines Publikums? Weil er sicher war, daß sie sich aus der nämlichen Absicht dort versammlet hatten, aus der er aufgetreten war, ihnen einen Menschen zu zeigen, nicht eine Viertelstunde” (“Anmerkungen” 669). Strangely, Lenz is referring here to Hans Sachs, not Shakespeare, as part of an ill-advised attempt to bolster an imagined dichotomy between classicist France and the “nördliche Ländern.” In the end, neither Shakespeare nor Sachs matter to Lenz’s theory except as a cipher. They are presented as the key to understanding an alternative, emergent history, a history centered on a new self-creating, self-determining person.

Lenz’s theoretical challenge to the world (and, inevitably, himself) is to create plays worthy of this new person, that is, plays ordered around an acting individual creating their own circumstances and destiny, and not the machinations of an inevitable fate as in Aristotle, or Nature hiding in the guise of the genius playwright as Herder would have it. And just as importantly, this new form of tragedy is not the arbitrary creation of an avant-garde playwright. Lenz places the changes in the form of theater external to the theater itself, and certainly beyond the genius creator. Theater is changing because something has changed in the world around it: not simply in the nature of nature, but specifically in the imagined audiences filling the halls. It is this audience which has grown weary of convention based on piety towards the gods and fate. It is this audience, unseen but felt, which has become unstuck in time and place. And finally, it is this audience who seeks a new center, a new grounding, in the self-making person. Lenz’s proposed tragic form seeks both to respond to this demand, and to shape it. And by the time “Anmerkung” was published in 1774, Lenz believed that

an example of such a work existed in Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*. In a brief introduction added to what was originally a talk presented to the Straßburger Sozietät, Lenz dates the talk as originating "zwei Jahre vor Erscheinung der Deutschen Art und Kunst und des Götz von Berlichingen" (641). On the one hand, this can be read as assertion of originality over and against his colleague Herder, as this places "Anmerkung" before "Von Shakespeare." But in the case of *Götz* this temporal location has a different resonance. As a play, *Götz* represents not a competing theoretical text, but the substantiation of the theory proposed, and its mention here is not by way of friendly competition, but rather the establishment of a new calendar, marking 1773 as *anno Götz.*

In 1775, Lenz would write the essay "Über Götz von Berlichingen," in order to commemorate the literary achievement the play represented. What initially seems odd about this essay is Lenz never mentions the form of Goethe's tragedy, even though *Götz* perfectly models every central feature advocated for in "Anmerkung." In *Götz*, Goethe sacrifices the traditional unities in favor of the unity of the character Götz. The Begebenheiten bend temporally and spatially around the acting protagonist Götz, resulting in scene changes which rival the dizzying rapidity of Lenz's own plays. Rather than an oversight, this neglect merely serves to support Lenz's claim that the change in structure is not in and of itself the final cause of the new tragic form. All that interests Lenz in *Götz* is the character of Götz himself and the effect Lenz believes he can produce. Lenz writes that a play's worth, its "*cui bono,*" is synonymous with its "Wirkung" on the general public, just as the size of a stone can be measured by the waves it creates when dropped into water (639). Returning to his comfortable straw man, Lenz states that this is precisely where French theater fails, as it is like a fine bottle of

champagne, pleasant in the moment but forgotten the next day (excluding a suggested hangover). For Lenz this represents squandered opportunity; Lenz is convinced of the pedagogical force of the play as a medium, a force which, if correctly harnessed, can reshape the entire nation.[39] *Götz* recognizes this potential, and contains "prometheische Funken" which steal unnoticed into the innermost regions of the viewer's soul; it teaches the audience a different way to be in the world, a different way to act. Much as Wieland describes the recommended dosage of Lenz's plays (limited, cautious, a-sequential), Lenz prescribes a rigorous program of consumption; "laßt uns dies Buch nicht gleich nach der ersten Lesung ungebraucht aus der Hand legen, laßt uns den Charakter… uns eigen machen," "Samt und sonders ahmt Götzen erst nach, lernt erst wieder denken, empfinden, handeln" (640, 639). *Götz* is not a piece of entertainment, something to be passively consumed and forgotten. *Götz* is a window into a better world, a world where individuals are no longer "Stumme Personen auf dem großen Theater der Welt" whose "Hände und Füße [jetzt noch] gebunden sind," and through reading, watching, but most importantly acting out *Götz*, Lenz believes it is possible to learn a different mode of being; "Durchs Nachahmen durchs Agieren drückt sich der Charakter tiefer ein" (640, 641). To emphasize how serious a proposition this is, Lenz ends the essay with a practical discussion of how they, his friends and members of the Straßburger Sozietät, could stage *Götz*, what they would and wouldn't need for fixtures, who could provide music for the scene transitions, how often they should practice before performing.

[39] The positive potential of plays to shape society will be explored in the final section, but it is also worth mentioning their destructive potential; in *Die Soldaten*, Marie's moral corruption is linked in the first instance to attending a comedy of loose morals. It is a play, not the villain Desportes, which teaches Marie to forego her bourgeois codex, and it is therefore a play which is responsible for her fall.

What is curious about Lenz's theory of theater is, despite devoting nearly all of his theoretical energy to defining a new tragic form, despite perceiving a popular demand for a new kind of acting character, despite the indication of *Götz* as a shining example of the potential of the new form, Lenz never wrote a tragedy, never created his own Götz. At the same time that Lenz theorized about tragedies, he was exclusively writing "Komödie," but not Komödie in the traditional sense of the word: his plays were neither primarily *funny* (in the dozens of reviews of his work, only one or two mention Lenz's gift for "humor," whereas the majority note with irritation his propensity for the macabre and bizarre), nor did they deal exclusively or even primarily with the lower estates: *Die Soldaten* focuses on the fall of a merchant's daughter, *Der Hofmeister* on the son of a priest, and *Der neue Menoza* on a "foreign" prince. The plays are certainly not without comedic elements: they often mimic Shakespearen comedic characters, contain physical gags (for example, a naked man in a wolf pelt fleeing from a pack of feral dogs) and wordplay. But this comedy exists in uneasy tension with suicide, genital mutilation, incest, murder and rape, all of which are handled with an unblinking earnestness, causing the moments of laughter to catch in the throat. In this context, Wieland's peevish description of the plays as "Mischspiele" is understandable: they seem to haphazardly combine elements of the tragic and comedic genres at random, creating unsettling tonal shifts, as unlike the "Champagner" of the French playwrights as possibly imaginable.

But the larger problem which arises as the result of Lenz writing exclusively "Komödie" is it removes the justification so carefully laid out in his essays for their unusual, fractured form; there is no figure even remotely comparable to Götz in Lenz's plays, no one whose character can be seen as creating themself and the world around

them and in so doing, creating a new anchor point for the unity of the play. The central figures in Lenz's plays are often dramaturgically condemned for their choices, but thematically it is the tragedy of the circumstances which are foregrounded and not the (necessary) reaction which they produced in the protagonist. Nor can it be said that the rapid shifts in time and space are exclusively interconnected through showing the circumstances of the main character, thereby at least situating their non-voluntary actions; Lenz's Komödie share one feature with traditional comedies in that they are sprawling, ensemble affairs and less focused on the "protagonist," who frequently falls out of view for whole scenes or acts at a time. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to explaining the puzzle presented by the form of Lenz's comedies: first by exploring Lenz's theory of free will and how his urgent quest to reintroduce free will into a materially determined universe inevitably failed, and second, by showing how this failure led to the creation of a new generic form, one centered on a new actor. This new actor, the organizing principle of Lenz's plays, cannot be described as the will of the gods, as in ancient tragedies, the genius author as medium for nature, as posited by Herder, nor as the self-making, deciding protagonist shaping the world with free will as suggested by Lenz's theoretical works and modeled by Goethe's *Götz*. The invisible hand which guides the characters of Lenz's Komödie (largely to their own doom) is an emergent sense of Society itself. These plays depict the fated destruction of the individual through the machinations of a supra-human system which is neither natural nor divine, a system both of humankind's own collective making and, potentially, beyond its control.

IV. Synthesizing Free Will and Material Determinism: A failed Resolution of Conflicting Enlightenment Ideals

Lenz's continual emphasis on the importance of the *acting character,* again the kind of person who "sich ihre Begebenheiten erschaffen, die selbstständig und unveränderlich die ganze große Maschine selbst drehen, ohne die Gottheiten in den Wolken anders nötig zu haben, als wenn sie wollen zu Zuschauern" and the positioning of this figure as the unifying principle of tragic theater is no coincidence, but rather based on the nagging fear that free will may be an illusion. As Johannes Lehmann showed in his essay "Leidenschaft und Sexualität: Materialistische Anthropologie im Sturm und Drang. JR.M. Lenz' *Die Soldaten* und Zerbin," not only must representatives of Sturm und Drang such as Lenz be seen as part of the Enlightenment, as an immanent critique thereof instead of proto-romanticists, but further that this critique, despite its continual emphasis on Geist, Genie, Wille, was deeply influenced by French materialism in general, and the works of Baron D'holbach in particular ("Leidenschaft und Sexualität" 181). To greatly oversimplify, D'Holbach argues in *The System of Nature* that the universe is comprised exclusively of matter which is subject only to the laws of physics. This radical materialism by necessity disallows the existence of any form of metaphysics; there can be no spirit, no soul, no God. D'Holbach's determinism has clear resonance with tenets central to the German Enlightenment of which Sturm und Drang was a part. Materialism offers a potent antidote to all forms of Aberglaube, Schwärmerei and religious obscurantism; the world is predictable, not through the dark musings of a prophet, but through the rational machinations of physical laws. Materialist determinism is also fundamentally egalitarian; if all individuals are merely the sum total of their lived experience, it becomes difficult to claim superiority on the basis of race, gender, class. Individuals are what they are because it is the only thing they could ever have become, and not as the result of sound judgement or divine favor.

However, D'holbach's materialism also contained more troubling implications: since humans, too, are only matter, and their actions are merely the sum total of the external forces which have worked upon that matter, not only does this preclude the existence of a soul, but it also eliminates the possibility of free will. This poses a general problem to goals central to the Enlightenment project, not least of which, the moral and spiritual enlightenment of the general public. Without free will, morality and the idea of progress become untenable. Without choice, the question of morality loses all meaning, for how can an action be considered moral if it could not have occurred any other way? And without morality, progress likewise becomes an empty signifier; without the benchmark of morality, how can anything be said to get better if there is only neutral change? The possibility that free will is a fiction rings particularly harshly in Lenz's ears (no doubt in part due to the permanent state of financial insecurity in which he lived his short life), and his writing is punctuated with the unease that, despite appearances, humans may not be masters of their own destinies. Nowhere is this more visible than in the introduction to "Über Götz von Berlichingen:"

> Wir werden geboren -- unsere Eltern geben uns Brot und Kleid -- unsere Lehrer drücken in unser Hirn Worte, Sprachen, Wissenschaften, -- irgend ein artiges Mädchen drückt in unser Herz den Wunsch es eigen zu besitzen, es in unsere Arme als unser Eigentum zu schließen, wenn sich nicht gar ein tierisch Bedürfnis mit hineinmischt -- es entsteht eine Lücke in der Republik wo wir hineinpassen -- unsere Freunde, Verwandte, Gönner setzen an und stoßen uns glücklich hinein -- wir drehen uns eine Zeitlang in diesem Platz herum wie die andern Räder und stoßen und treiben -- bis wir wenns noch so ordentlich geht abgestumpft sind und zuletzt wieder einem neuen Rade Platz machen müssen --- das ist… unsere

> Biographie --und was bleibt nun der Mensch noch anders als eine vorzüglichkünstliche kleine Maschine, die in die große Maschine, die wir Welt, Weltbegebenheiten, Weltläufte nennen besser oder schlimmer hineinpaßt.

What is remarkable in this passage is the extreme passivity of the individual, who exists only as the recipient of action from others: parents, teachers, friends, relatives, even the first love all put their stamp on the inert clay of the passive individual (and presumably are likewise also only the sum total of their societal imprinting). People are only small machines within the larger grinding machine, tiny gears which fit better or worse than their peers in life, and are quickly replaced after death. If this nightmare is true, then humans exist in a world bereft of choice, free will and meaning: "Aber heißt das gelebt? Heißt das seine Existenz gefühlt, seine sebstständige Existenz, den Funken von Gott? Ha er muß in was Besserm stecken, der Reiz des Lebens: denn ein Ball anderer zu sein, ist ein trauriger nieder drückender Gedanke, eine ewige Sklaverei, eine nur künstlichere, eine vernünftige aber eben um dessentwillen desto elenderer Tierschaft." This paradigm which Lenz believes *Götz* inverts; the character of Götz is the tiny gear who through force of will spins the heavens.

But how, then, to reconcile the seemingly insurmountable tension which exists between a material, deterministic universe and the ideal of free will as represented by the figure of Götz, a person who has made himself into the gear which turns the universe, modeling a new way of existing in the world? In short, Lenz, like Kant, Mendelssohn and countless others, fails to do so convincingly, but in his attempt Lenz generates a hybrid model of the human, a being which is simultaneously subject to material laws and (theoretically) capable of self-determination, and it is this model which serves as the building block for his theatrical works. Lehmann argues that Lenz achieves

this hybridity by reintroducing the spirit to the material world, but subjecting this spirit to both its own internal (meta)physics, and, since it is housed in a body, to the external physics of the world. Humans, according to Lenz's essay "Versuch über das erste Principium der Moral," are "Hermaphroditen... gedoppelte Tiere" existing in both the physical as well as the spiritual realm (Principium 502). The somewhat flimsy proof he offers is two fold: first, all cultures and all peoples fear death--how to account for this if we are nothing but matter, just as the worms that eat us after our deaths? The second piece of evidence he gives is that there is something substantively different about the head vs. all other appendages, that we as beings recognize "Ja dort oben in der Zirbeldrüse sitzt etwas, das sagt: Ich bin, und wenn das Etwas fort ist, so hört das Ich bin auf." This "fremde Herr" is dictated by two separate but interrelated drives, the drive for Vollkommenheit, representing the internal source of motivation, and the drive for Glückseligkeit, representing the external situatedness of the acting spirit. Vollkommenheit is described as "Wir haben von Natur gewisse Kräfte und Fähigkeiten in uns, die wir fühlen… bewußt sind -- und jemehr sie sich entwickeln, desto deutlicher fühlen… bewußt werden" (503-504). These abilities are relative in that they are specific to the individual, but absolute in the sense that God made all people good in the sense that he made them perfectible: no matter what those abilities are, they are felt, and the individual longs to enhance them. Maintaining the physics parallel, Lenz argues that this means that, just as matter is never truly in stasis, the spirit, too, must be in constant motion, striving towards the never-achieved self-perfection.

Lenz was quite literal in his interpolation of external physics into the internal realm, arguing that just as Newton had discovered that instead of just one source of motion, every reaction in the world produces an equal and opposite reaction, so to must

the motion of seeking self-perfection find an equal and opposite corollary, the source of which is to be found in the Leidenschaften in general, and Konkupiscenz in particular. Lehmann notes that, borrowing from theorists such as Helvétius, Lenz accepted these passions as a good and necessary part of the being, as it is in overcoming them and striving for perfectibility the soul is put into motion. In “Anmerkung,” Lenz notes that, instead of complaining about the needs of the body with the “Hypochondristen,” people need to recognize the “sichern Freund” that they have in their physical form, “Der Schöpfer hat unserer Seele einen Bleiklumpen angehängt, der wie die Penduln an der Uhr sie durch seine niederziehende Kraft in beständiger Bewegung erhält” (647). According to Lenz, it is therefore the moral responsibility of the individual to hold this motion of the physical form in constant tension with the drive towards Vollkommenheit, to enhance the equal and opposite force opposed to the gravity of sensual desire and thereby avoid stasis, and with it moral depravity and death. In this, one can draw parallels to Lenz’s one time professor, Immanuel Kant (although by most accounts, Lenz was a poor and infrequent student); Kant argued that it was only in those actions in which one chooses to act against natural inclination and in accordance with a universal law that free will becomes imaginable. For if one feels good in, for example, assisting the poor, how is it possible to know if this action was the result of choice and not the functioning of hidden, mechanical, biological needs? The difference for Lenz is that acting in tension with biological need is not only the circumstances under which free will becomes thinkable, these same biological needs create the motion within the soul which first makes free will possible.

It is in the state of heightened motion towards the goal of self perfection, against the desires of the physical form, that the external experience of Glückseligkeit is first

possible. However, the external contingency of Glückseligkeit indicates that, while related to Vollkommenheit, Glückseligkeit is of an entirely different nature: “Die Vollkommenheit beruht auf uns selber, die Glückseligkeit nicht. Die Vollkommenheit ist eine Eigenschaft, die Glückseligkeit ist ein Zustand” (506). What this means in practice is that Vollkommenheit is internal to the individual, while Glückseligkeit requires “eine gewisse Lage, eine gewisse Relation unsers Selbst mit den Dingen außer uns” (507). Put differently, although Lenz refers to both as “drives,” only Vollkommenheit is an internal motivation, while the condition of Glückseligkeit is the sum total of the external factors upon which Vollkommenheit is contingent, those forces acting upon the body and thereby spirit of the individual. As a result, “Der höchste Zustand der Bewegung ist unserm Ich der angemessenste, das heißt derjenige Zustand, wo unsere äußern Umstände unsere Relationen und Situationen so zusammenlaufen, daß wir das größtmöglichste Feld vor uns haben, unsere Vollkommenheit zu erhöhen zu befödern” (507). The ideal external situation is that situation which gives the individual the greatest degree of freedom to act, with freedom again understood as the ability to hold our desires in check, creating energy to strive for our own perfectibility. Lenz describes this situation as:

> wir die Fähigkeiten unsers Verstandes, unsers Willens, unserer Empfindungen, unserer Phantasei, aller unser untern Seelenkräfte, hernach auch unserer Gliedmaßen und unsers Körpers immer mehr entwickeln, verfeinern und erhöhen können und zwar in einer gewissen Übereinstimmung der Teile zum Ganzen, in einer gewissen Harmonie und Ordnung, welche uns unserer Vernunft, die von allen Vorurteilen befreit ist und höchste Oberherrschaft über alle unsere übrigen Seelen vermögen erhalten hat, selbst lehren wird. (509)

The ideal state is therefore that in which an individual's Vernunft is the governing force, organizing all aspects of the person, all abilities spiritual and physical, bringing them into a "Harmonie und Ordnung." Again, it is easy to draw parallels to Kant; the reason that an individual following the dictates of the categorical imperative is considered "free," is because the categorical imperative itself is, according to Kant, nothing more than the law which the individual's own reason dictates, namely that one act such that your actions could be universal law. Free will for Kant has nothing to do with free choice: the only *choice* is to choose to counteract animal nature and sensory input; anything else are simply the immoral actions of a biological machine. While Lenz's version of free will is similar in that it is an active choice against the body's natural inclination (in particular Konkupiszenz), it bears more similarity to the modern conception in that this counter-motion provides only the initial impulse and hopefully results in creative action, pursuing one's own perfection.

Situating the deciding spirit within a material body subject to external circumstances, and making the possibility of exercising free will contingent on those external circumstances has drastic consequences; by granting the physical world ingress to the soul, Lenz allows for all manner of interference to an individual's ability to lead a just and happy life. The fact that a person is poor, a woman, a soldier, a hired hand, etc. must all be taken into account when calculating the *possibility* of just action, and it is entirely thinkable for external circumstance to prevent an individual from stabilizing their internal economy, and therefore to be physically incapable of achieving anything like freedom of choice. Lenz recognizes the significance of this interference, and as a result, raises the necessity of generating the aforementioned "größtmöglichste Feld" for free action to a moral imperative: "Wir müssen suchen andere um uns herum glücklich zu

machen… nicht allein ihre Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln, sondern auch sie in solche Zustände zu setzen, worin sie ihre Fähigkeiten am besten entwickeln können. Wenn jeder diesen Vorsatz in sich zur Reife und zum Leben kommen läßt, so werden wir eine glückliche Welt haben" (510). Lenz fully admits that "diese Welt, ist keine solche Welt. Jeder sorgt nur für seinen eignen Zustand, für den Zustand seines Nachbaren aber schließt er die Augen zu," with the result that many individuals simply are not free.

Once again, it is easy to draw parallels to Kant. Writing some 14 years later, Kant argued in *Metaphysik der Sitten,* that, to be qualified for citizenship within a state, an individual must possess both civil equality and civil independence and should recognize no laws but those to which they have freely assented. In so doing, Kant also recognized the limitations placed on the individual by social structures, as these stipulations necessarily precluded large portions of the population from participation in the state, namely anyone who is "von anderen Individuen befehligt oder beschützt" (Kant 315) Kant provides a long litany of people thereby excluded from true citizenship, including specifically "der Unmündige," "alles Frauenzimmer," as well as "der Hauslehrer in Vergleichung mit dem Schulmann." Perhaps the most significant feature of this list is that it universally bans individuals limited to the private sphere from civic participation; anyone who lives or works under a patriarch lacks both the equality and independence required to contribute to the state. This is because, for members of these groups, their lives and their decisions are not truly their own; they are under the immediate control of the Hausherr, a person who has the unquestioned authority to dictate their actions, be that person their husband, father or employer. However, Kant places much stricter limits on the range and scope of the effects the physical world can have on the individual spirit: for while Kant argues that their dependence necessarily bars them civic participation, he

distinguishes this from their *fundamental* equality and freedom as human beings. While this may seem hollow comfort to those bereft of all political agency, for Kant this is an important distinction, because it ensures that even the subservient members of society, so long as they are rational beings, are capable of following, regardless to external circumstances, the dictates of the categorical imperative. This is what makes the categorical imperative *categorical*, that it applies to *and can be successfully followed by* all rational beings, regardless of class, gender and, theoretically, even species. The categorical imperative is derived of the rational mind itself; it is *imperative* because it is the law which the mind dictates for itself and would wish on all others.

There is a stoic optimism and comfort in Kant's philosophy which is noticeably absent from both Lenz's theory and, more markedly, plays. For Kant, the possibility of free will is contingent on no external circumstances, and cannot be damaged by any degree of abuse or inequality; even the individual suffering torture can still chose to follow the categorical imperative, and, for example, chose not to lie in order to end their suffering. To bring this difference into sharper focus, as mentioned earlier, not only can external, physical influences not prevent the exercise of free will, it is in overcoming the obstacles presented in front of it that possibility of free will can be most clearly observed; how else to explain the person who refuses to break under torture, or who gives up their friend to the police despite personal sentiment?[40] In his attempt to fuse the metaphysics of the soul with the material physics of D'Holbach, Lenz created instead a system which highlighted the fragility of the possibility of free will. Free will is the result of an internal

[40] Christoph Horn adds an interesting possibility to this standard reading of Kant in his 2016 article "Kant's Political Philosophy as a Theory of Non-Ideal Normativity," in which he suggests a continuity between Kant's earlier moral philosophy and his later political philosophy, a continuity which indicates a waning faith in the possibility of individuals acting free from external coercion.

overcoming of the desires of the flesh through the opposite reaction of a reasoning mind and, in isolation, is achievable by all humans. Humans, however, do not exist in isolation and worse still, the vast majority of them live lives of servitude, and as such are unable to dictate the course of their own actions, instead completely dependent on the will of some "Herr," and not their own reason. For Lenz, free will is therefore contingent on external circumstances. The recurring bogey-men of soldiers are a danger to society because they are, by definition, not masters of their own destiny, but instead follow the direct orders of their superiors, thereby preventing them from taking the actions necessary to achieve equilibrium in their internal economies. As discussed in the final section, I believe it is the confrontation with contingency of free will for the majority of society which prevented Lenz from writing his own *Götz*, and led to the creation of a new genre, one which through its structure highlighted the deterministic qualities of the everyday, and heralded the birth of a new "eisernes Schicksal," Society.

V. Society as Comedy of the Unfree

Of "Anmerkungen Übers Theater's" 30 pages, less than two pages are dedicated to the subject of comedy. Nor does there exist a parallel essay which lays out the theory of Lenz's genre of choice in detail: in "Rezionsion des neuen Menoza," comedy is once again dealt with at the margins of topics dearer to Lenz's heart: free will, tragedy and the centrality of the acting character. Within these few pages, Lenz offers three interrelated explanations of the nature and function of comedy as he understands it: first, Lenz returns to an ancient understanding of comedy as "low," that is, geared towards a popular audience. Second, he argues that comedies are the form in which the Begebenheiten are prioritized over the Personen, and that these events are organized

around a central idea. Finally, and partially in combination of the first two definitions, Lenz posits the comedy as a "Gemälde der Gesellschaft," a tool intended to capture and shape the sum total of human interactions. This section will explore the audience/many focused nature of Lenz's invented genre of choice, briefly examine modern criticism that Lenz's works lacked true critical force, and conclude by suggesting Lenz's self-created position as social-physicist uniquely opened his works to societal shifts, allowing them to serve as the mouthpiece for a non-identical Many.

It is not difficult to find passages in Lenz's essay that would seem to support a simplistic understanding of comedy as "low" entertainment, that is, entertainment for the masses. In "Rezension der Neue Menoza," Lenz writes "Die Komödien jener [den alten Griechen]... waren für das Volk und der Unterschied von Lachen und Weinen war nur eine Erfindung späterer Kunstrichter," a definition which he seemingly takes into the modern moment with no modification "Ich nenne durchaus Komödie nicht eine Vorstellung die Bloß Lachen erregt, sondern eine Vorstellung die für jedermann ist. Tragödie ist nur für den ernsthaftern Teil des Publikums, der Helden der Vorzeit in ihrem Licht anzusehen und ihren Wert auszumessen im Stande ist" ("Rezension der Neue Menoza" 703). Comedies are for "das Volk" in its entirety, whereas the tragedy is aimed at a more rarified audience, one capable of understanding and appreciating the actions taking place on stage. This same thread of comedy as the genre for the multitudes continues in the brief introduction Lenz provided to the translation of "Love's Labor's Lost:"[41]

[41] This is the *only* bridge Lenz provides his essay and the translated work, and after highlighting "Anmerkung's" heavy tragedy-focus, the consternation of his reviewers over the inclusion of a lesser known comedy is perhaps understandable.

> Wer noch Magen hat und ich kann ihm mit einem bisher unübersetzten -- Volksstück -- Komödie, von Shakespearn aufwarten…. Mensch, in jedem Verhältnis gleich bewandert, gleich stark, schlug er ein Theater fürs ganze menschliche Geschlecht auf, wo jeder stehn, staunen, sich freuen, sich wiederfinden konnte, vom obersten bis zum untersten. Seine Könige und Königinnen schämen sich so wenig als der niedrigste Pöbel, warmes Blut im schlagenden Herzen zu fühlen, oder kützelnder Galle in schalkhaftem Scherzen Luft zu machen, denn sie sind Menschen, auch unterm Reifrock, kennen keine Vapeurs, sterben nicht vor unsern Augen in müßiggehenden Formularen dahin, kennen den tötenden Wohlstand [Anstand] nicht. ("Anmerkungen" 671)

Here "Komödie" is directly equated with "Volksstück," but another element begins to crystalize, the hybridity of the comedic audience. Comedies are not *exclusively* for the lower strata of society, but rather attempt something more difficult, namely to capture a human truth which finds resonance in all portions of society. The diversity opposite the stage is reflected on it, with everyone from "Könige" to the "niedrigste Pöbel" able to see themselves represented, and through this representation "staunen, sich freuen, sich wiederfinden." It is this doubled diversity which makes comedy "ein Theater fürs ganze menschliche Geschlecht."

The parallel diversity of stage and audience is a diversity of purpose: rather than simply reflecting that which is, Lenz imagines comedy as a specific kind of intervention. Lenz contends that comedy in its modern understanding, that is comedy as humor, took this form as writers began to understand that "der gröbere Teil des Volks geneigter zum Lachen als zum Weinen sein, und je näher es dem Stande der Wildheit oder dem Hervorgehn aus demselbigen, destomehr sich seine Komödien dem Komischen nährern

mußten" ("Der neue Menoza" 703). Lenz seeks to access this "Wildheit" of the lower social strata, not simply to increase the popularity of his productions, but because he seeks to reform the audience: "Daher müssen unsere deutschen Komödienschreiber komisch und tragisch zugleich schreiben, weil das Volk, für das sie schreiben, oder doch wenigstens schreiben sollten, ein solcher Mischmasch von Kultur und Rohigkeit, Sittigkeit und Wildheit ist. So erschafft der komische Dichter dem tragischen sein Publikum." The tragic-comic nature of comedies as Lenz conceived, both reflects society as it exists, and is a pedagogical tool designed to create a new audience, a new society. Comedy is therefore a transitional genre, a critique which serves to indicate the gap between the world which is, and the world as it should be. By indicating that the audience for the tragedy as described in "Anmerkung" does not yet exist, Lenz indirectly explains the absence his own *Götz*; *Götz* shows a kind of freedom which remains unintelligible to the life experience of the majority of society. As a result, Lenz's call to arms at the end of "Über Götz von Berlichingen" is perhaps not as general as it first appears: Götz in this light seems specifically tailored to a group such as the Straßburger Sozietät, one capable not only of understanding the significance of Götz as an acting individual but, through a process of reenacting, potentially able to recreate the manner of living which it depicts within their own lives. Again, *Götz* is significant for Lenz because of its utopian potential. Despite being a historical tragedy, i.e. describing an already-failed attempt of an individual to exert their will in the greater world, Lenz believes that the character Götz nevertheless models a different kind of being in the world, demonstrating the potential of an individual properly harnessing their internal economy, and temporarily free from the external constraints which could inhibit the exercise of a free, creative will. From this shining example, the audience should learn:

> [D]aß handeln, handeln die Seele der Welt sei... daß wir dadurch allein Gott ähnlich werden, der unaufhörlich handelt und unaufhörlich an seinen Werken sich ergötzt: das lernen wir daraus, daß die in uns handelnde Kraft, unser Geist, unser höchstes Anteil sei, daß die allein unserm Körper mit allen seinen Sinnlichkeiten und Empfindungen das wahre Leben... gebe, daß ohne denselben all unser Genuß all unsere Empfindungen, all unser Wissen doch nur ein Leiden, doch nur ein aufgeschobener Tod sind. Das lernen wir daraus, daß diese unsre handelnde Kraft nicht eher ruhe, nicht eher ablasse zu wirken, zu regen, zu toben, als bis sie uns Freiheit um uns her verschafft, Platz zu handeln, guter Gott Platz zu handeln, und wenn es ein Chaos wäre das du geschaffen, wüste und leer, aber Freiheit wohnte nur da und wir könnten dir nachahmend drüber brüten, bis was herauskäme -- Seligkeit! Seligkeit! Göttergefühl das! ("Über Götz" 638)

Not only does Götz himself act with a rare freedom (a freedom at least in part made possible through his exalted position within society), in the idealized form presented by Goethe, Götz attempts through revolution to follow the Lenzian Imperative, namely to help create the possibility of exercising free will for those less fortunate.

Compared with *Götz*, the comedies of Lenz have an entirely different purpose; rather than show the potential of the world as it could be, they are a shocking reminder of the cruelty of the world as it is, and it is in this context that Lenz's description of the comedic form as a "Gemälde" must be understood: **"**Komödie ist Gemälde der menschlichen Gesellschaft, und wenn die ernsthaft wird, kann das Gemälde nicht lachend werden," ("Rezension des neuen Menoza" 703). This also helps explain the vehemence with which Lenz denied the accusations that his works were "erfunden," simply the surreal ramblings of an over-imaginative mind. Lenz describes his process for

creating *Menoza* as “Ich habe gegen diesen Menschen [Prinz Tandi] gewöhnliche Menschen meines Jahrhunderts abstechen lassen, aber immer mit dem mir einmal unumstößlich angenommnen Grundgesetz für theatralische Darstellung, zu dem Gewöhnlichen, ich möcht es die trefende Ähnlichkeit heißen, eine Verstärkung eine Erhöhung hinzuzutun, die uns die Alltagscharaktere im gemeinen Leben auf dem Theater anzüglich interessant machen kann” (701).[42] Not coincidentally, Lenz claims this was also Shakespeare’s genius, his ability to represent “Die Mannigfaltigkeit der Charaktere und Psychologien,” which Lenz posits as “Fundgrube der Natur… sie allein bestimmt die unendliche Mannigfaltigkeit der Handlungen und Begebenheiten in der Welt” (“Anmerkungen” 661). The ordering here is important: even in the absence of a free actor such as Götz, both the Handlung and the Begebenheiten contained within it are the result of the complex web of interactions between the realistically depicted “Psychologien” and “Charaktere” of the figures within the play. One of Lenz’s chief grievances against Voltaire and other French playwrights is that their plays are too artificed, they are “willkürlich zusammengesetzten Fabel, die nur in den Wünschen des Dichters… nicht in den Charaktern den Grund hat” (662). Lenz compares these works repeatedly with carefully choreographed “Tänze,” inhabited only by “Marionettenpuppen.” Their actions seem false, and their words ring hollow, and Lenz suggests amusingly that the audience can hear Voltaire’s “Perücke” in every elegant turn of phrase. The resulting work is therefore “nicht ein Gemälde der Natur, sondern seiner [Voltaires] eigenen Seele” (661).

[42] In the case of *Menoza*, Prinz Tandi functions as a perfect foil against these slightly exaggerated figures of the real world, and is described as “ “Ein Mensch, der alles, was ihm vorkommt, ohne Absichten schätzt,” thereby acting as an audience stand-in.

It is significant that Lenz uses “Gemälde der Natur” to describe comedy while elsewhere he refers to it as a “Gemälde der Gesellschaft.” This interchangeability suggests that in the move from tragedy to comedy, Lenz has moved closer to both Herder, and the formulations of Aristotle: “Die Hauptempfindung in der Komödie ist immer die Begebenheit, die Hauptempfindung in der Tragödie ist die Person, die Schöpfer ihrer Begebenheiten” (668). The only difference between this definition and that of Aristotle is, first, that it is describing a comedy and not a tragedy and second, that it qualifies the importance of each with the addition of “Empfindung.” The parallels to Herder seem even closer: Herder’s definition of the tragedy as the genius channeling nature, reflecting God’s divine creation through their own creation, orchestrating figures who appear to be acting “im Wahn des Freyen” around a central idea, finds almost exact expression in “Anmerkung:” “Meiner Meinung nach wäre immer der Hauptgedanke einer Komödie eine Sache, einer Tragödie eine Person… Die Personen sind für die Handlungen da -- für die artigen Erfolge, Wirkungen, Gegenwirkungen, ein Kreis herumgezogen, der sich um eine Hauptidee dreht -- und es ist eine Komödie” (669). According to Lenz’s theory, therefore, a comedy functions as a hybrid: part reflection of nature/society, part artifice of the author. The characters must behave and speak as someone of their station would, and taken together, their interactions determine the course of the Handlung. In other words, it is only collectively, unconsciously that they shape the Begebenheiten of the play, and the author, by arranging them around a central idea, can control the course these Begebenheiten take. The figures act *as if* they were free, but in reality their trajectories are entirely calculable, like that of a flying “Bombe.” “Im Trauerspiele aber sind die Handlungen um der Person willen da -- sie stehen also nicht in meiner Gewalt… sondern sie stehen bei der Person, die ich

darstelle. In der Komödie aber gehe ich von den Handlungen aus, und lasse Personen Teil dran nehmen welche ich will." Like the imagined audience in front of which they presented, and unlike the figure of Götz, they are "unmündig," unaccountable for their own actions which are merely the product of natural temperament interacting with external circumstance.

One of the accusations often leveled by modern-day critics against Lenz's theatrical works is that they either fail to serve as a critique for society as it existed in the late 18th century, or more charitably, while these plays successfully capture the problems plaguing society, Lenz was unaware of their true (economic, class-based) causes, a type of analysis which would have to wait another fifty years. In Franz Werner's 1981 dissertation, *Soziale Unfreiheit und 'bürgerliche Intelligenz' im 18. Jahrhundert: Der organisierende Gesichtspunkt in J.M.R. Lenzens Drama "Der Hofmeister oder Vorteile der Privaterziehung*," he describes Lenz's comedic form in the following manner:

> [D]ie Komödie [erweist sich] als die geeignete literarische Gattung, Verhältnisse darzustellen, die sich stärker als das Individuum erweisen. Nicht im Sinne dessen, was lachen macht, sondern die Erfahrung der Unfreiheit, Fremdbestimmung, Entfremdung von der Gesellschaft und Bitterkeit der Ohnmacht werden auf der Inhaltsebene zum Konstitutiven Definitionsmerkmal einer Komödie." (206)

Werner, therefore, recognizes Lenz's genre of comedy as an attempt to capture the unfreedom of modern existence. However, Werner's central thesis, as indicated by the title, is that *Hofmeister* is first and foremost an autobiographical work, and as such, that "das Movens" of the piece were Lenz's own experiences of "Unfreiheit," specifically

during his time as Hofmeister, but also more generally as part of the underprivileged "bürgerliche Intelligenz" (213). Werner argues that this autobiographical perspective necessarily blinds Lenz to the systemic nature of the problems, causing Lenz to instead universalize his own personal feelings of alienation. As a result, instead of creating a critique of the inequities of the current status quo, Lenz seeks resolution through improbable personal solutions (for example, characters winning the lottery or inexplicably escaping from prison off stage). Worse, Werner holds that as *comedies*, Lenz's plays enact a public catharsis designed to remove the "Bedrohliche" from social injustices, and in so doing, "die Ausweglosigkeiten der Realität durch Bagatellisierung zu bewältigen" (209). Through this process, Werner contends that both the direness of the situation of the subaltern, as well as the culpability of those in power, is weakened and effectively defanged. As such, Lenz's *Hofmeister* is *only* a "Gemälde" and not a "Protest," and by provoking "Überlegene und Unterlegene auch über das gleiche [zu lachen]," Lenz creates a false "Gruppensolidarität:" "[wer] eine Kritik Ernst machen will, muß auf das Lachen verzichten" (212). The chapter concludes that Lenz "war nicht mutig genug, den 'Kleinen' die Würde des Tragischen zuzugestehen und die 'Großen' der Komik des Lächerlichen preiszugeben," and as such reveals himself to be merely a "bürgerlicher Aufklärer."

Michael Thiele is much more charitable in his 2014 essay, "Der Pietistische Schulmeister, der Aufgeklärte Hofmeister?: Lenz und Brecht schreiben Schule." Unlike Werner, Thiele does not strip Lenz of his critical potential, and convincingly describes Lenz's writing as an "einheitliches Schreibprogramm," highlighting that Lenz made no distinction between his theoretical and theatrical texts. According to Thiele, the central problem this "Schreibprogramm" sought to address was:

> Wie eine allumfassende ganzheitliche Selbstbildung, die alle Talente des Individuums harmonisch, echt und tabufrei hin zu vollständigen autonomen Menschen ausformt, zu vermitteln ist mit seine Eingründung in eine Gesellschaft, die sich von einem ständisch aufgebauten geschlossenen zu einem funktional ausdifferenzierten offenen System hinbewegt. (Thiele 80).

In other words, to explore the possibility of an individual reconciling their inner impulse towards Vollkommenheit with the necessary external material circumstances, resulting in Glückseligkeit. But like Werner, Thiele concentrates almost exclusively on Lenz's proposed solutions to this problem, rather than the writing from in which the problem is posed. And indeed, it is difficult to overlook Lenz's "solutions," since they are utterly bizarre by modern standards; for while Lenz determined the central problem to be a "Kluft zwischen Trieb und Gesellschaft," Thiele notes that the solutions offered to this problem tend to be purely authoritarian. In other words, Lenz seeks to close the gap between the desires of the individual and societal reality, not through ushering in the potentially chaotic "Platz zu handeln" so adamantly argued for in "Über Götz von Berlichingen," but rather through modifying the internal economy of the individual through authoritarian state intervention. In order to curb the "Konkupiszanz" at the core of the moral economy, Lenz suggested "staatlich unterhaltenen Pflanzschule… das sind Soldatenbordelle mit vom König besoldeten Konkubinen… eine Eheerlaubnis für die bis dahin zur Ehelosigkeit verurteilten Soldaten und weitet diese zu einem Programm militärischer Erziehung aus, das zu einer nahezu kompletten Söldnerisierung in sämtlichen Ständen der Gesellschaft führen würde" (Thiele 80). By connecting these strategies to Lenz's pietistic upbringing, Thiele is much more convincingly able to argue for the fundamental conservatism of Lenz's writings, as well as indicate his potential

misdiagnosis of the problems plaguing 18th-century society, before concluding that it was only much later in Brecht's 20th-century production of "Der Hofmeister" that the economic, systemic inequalities responsible were addressed.

The limitation to these approaches is, by focusing on the (auto)biographical components of Lenz's writing along with his too private, insufficiently systemic solutions, they neglect the most important aspect of Lenz's writing: form. For it is in the form, both in his plays and theoretical writings, that something new emerges. To recapitulate the core principles of Lenz's comedic form: it contains representations of people from various estates, talking, behaving and interacting as realistically as possible, that is, not as in a choreographed "dance," but as if operating in accordance with their own will. Collectively, their actions combine to create the Begebenheiten of the play, and with them, the Handlung. This Handlung neither adheres to the Aristotelian unities, nor do the scattered scenes focus around the actions of a single acting protagonist, as suggested by Lenz's tragic ideal. Instead, all of the elements "[drehen] sich um eine Hauptidee." Schmid already noted this organizational pattern in his assessment of Lenz's oeuvre: "Seine Schauspiele habe ausserdem das Eigne, daß sie zur Bestätigung eines philosophischen Satzes geschrieben sind; der Hofmeister, um der Privaterziehung, der romantische neue Menoza, um mit Herder des kultivirten Europa zu spotten" ("Fortsetzung der kritischen Nachrichten" 183). But Schmid implies a degree of intentionality which I do not believe was the primary organizing force of Lenz's work; Lenz operated under rigorous, self-imposed laws of authenticity. This is evidenced by both his disdain for hearing Voltaire's "wig" in the overly polished words of Voltaire's characters, regardless of economic station, and also in his description of his protagonist Prinz Tandi as "Ein Mensch, der alles, was ihm vorkommt, ohne Absichten schätzt," a

character trait which Lenz lauds as “in unserm eigennützigen Jahrhundert der einzige hochachtungswürdige Mensch” (“Rezension des neuen Menoza” 700). Lenz has tasked himself with the creation of a world parallel to the existing world, one in which the inhabitants operate under the same material laws, are affected by the same internal libidinal economies conflicting with external circumstance. Lenz is a physicist and his plays are a laboratory; he places the pieces and charts motion, action-reaction.

Lenz’s sense of objectivity prevents him from moment to moment meddling with the internal economy of the figures presented. Figures such as the Geheimer Rat in *Hofmeister*, Tandi in *Menoza*, and Eisenhardt in *Soldaten* are often indicated as Lenz’s mouthpieces within his plays, voicing theories or proposals mirrored in Lenz’s theoretical works and therefore theoretically indicating the *true* meaning or intent of the play. But these figures are subject to the same laws as all other actors within the world of the play, and their opinions are colored, situated and often undermined by the events which surround them. The Geheimer Rat expounds to Läuffer’s father that his son’s fall is exclusively the result of his *choice* to become a Hofmeister. As a result, Läuffer is directly culpable for all of the misfortune which befalls him over the course of the play. In so doing, the Geheimer Rat echoes Lenz’s own fears for the free will (or lack thereof) of domestic servants, as well as Lenz’s critiques of private vs. public education. But the audience also knows that Läuffer’s “choice” was hardly that, since the play opens with Läuffer bemoaning his impossible position, that he is too young to become a pastor like his father, too poor to continue his studies at the university, and has no chance of obtaining a state position--all problems the Geheimer Rat even tacitly recognizes. In the interim, Läuffer must eat, and like his father before him, the only possible position for him at this age is that of Hofmeister. It is because these opinions are always situated within a

larger context, because the world Lenz creates is not a carefully orchestrated explication of a theory, but rather a dynamic world operating in accordance with immutable laws, that Lenz's own theories often ring hollow or improbable. The audience is free to draw conclusions other than those provided by the author. This is why Werner's critique, that Lenz offers only private solutions to a systemic problem, a truth which Lenz's bürgliche perspective blinds him to, is so empty. In a later chapter, Werner attempts to demonstrate how the private alienation Lenz felt was universalized in *Hofmeister*, enumerating all of the relationships within the play and showing them all to be in various stages of dissolution. What Werner fails to recognize is that a systemic problem is hidden in plain sight; by Werner's own account, every relationship is clearly, visibly poisoned by creeping economic inequities and the increasing fungibility of the interpersonal. That Lenz himself may not have correctly determined the root cause of the problem is irrelevant; the problem is there, and sows great disquiet in both the figures on the stage and in the minds of the audience. It is also for this reason that Werner's contention that the laughter caused by Lenz's plays was a cathartic release of tensions which built a false sense of "Gemeinde" on top of ongoing systemic inequality, is itself laughable. In the 200+ years that people have been reading and viewing Lenz's plays, no one has ever left with the warm assurance that "things are really not as bad as they seem!" The laughter which these plays evoke is a nervous, skittering laughter of unease: these are plays which gnaw, plays which produce an uncertainty which lingers and puzzles, as reflected by their reception both then and now. These plays reveal difficulties which are both private and public. The figures within them are both victims of circumstance and also implicated in their grim fates.

This is because the “Hauptidee” of Lenz’s comedies is revealed to be Society itself. It is this emergent sense of a collective force comprised of individuals but greater than any single element which is the acting character shaping the Begebenheiten of the play to its will--“individual” here understood not in the modern sense of individuality, the unique self, but rather a strictly relational term in the sense of separated-off, dislodged from traditional bonds and reconfiguring in a heterogenous group defined by exclusion. It is in the service of Society that time and space tear, bombarding the audience with “Schattengemälde” blinking rapidly one after the other before a blinding light. Society is the “Hauptidee,” not because this was the intent of the theorist Lenz, but because this is what the combined physics of a diversity of believable humans acting under modern circumstances reveal. This accounts for the gap between Lenz’s theoretical ideal, the tragedy which serves as a pedagogical model for the possibility of a new kind of human existence, and the reality of his literary production, comedies marked by unfreedom and temporal and spatial disruption. Lenz claims that he chose this form in order to create the audience of tomorrow, to shape the heterogeneous population before him into one which was homogenous in its universal enlightenment and personal freedom. But it would be more accurate to state that it was this heterogeneous audience, this unseen, unknown, uncharacterizable Many, which chose the form for him, coauthoring plays which allowed for an expression of a new kind of existence cresting from the rubble of traditional society. The next chapter will explore a parallel developing crowd-media, the journalistic form as represented by the explosion of enlightenment journals at the end of the 18th century.

Chapter 3: Reaching for the Many

This chapter examines the rise of Enlightenment journals and journalistic writing at the end of the 18th century. It begins by detailing the physical form, circulation, and reading practices upon which these journals were built, before transitioning to the open, iterative, a-disciplinary form of writing which developed alongside them. This writing form is read as a dialectic motion, on the one hand the result of popular pressure from an unseen, heterogeneous public, and on the other hand as an active attempt by journal authors and editors to (re)incorporate this non-identical Many through the collaborative enlightenment of society. The chapter ends by examining the works of Christian Garve as an example of the penetrative force of the will of this Many, demonstrating the way in which even his traditional scholarly books must be re-imagined as an extension of the same journalistic impulse.

I. A Changing Audience, a Changing Medium

When the first issue of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* was published in January of 1788, it represented the newest entry in a crowded field, the enlightened monthly journal. Already five years earlier when the first issue of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* was published, editors Johann Erich Biester and Friedrich Gedike wrote: "Unter den vortreflichen, guten, mittelmäßigen und schlechten periodischen Schriften, womit unser Vaterland vereichert, beschenkt, überschwemmt, und heimgesucht wird,-- tritt nun auch unserer Berlinische Monatsschrift auf...", before restating pages later in the article "Die neue Monatsschrift: Eine Allegorie:"

> Kannst du sie zählen, die drängende Schaar der funkelnden Sterne,

Dort an des Himmels Gewölb? --

Zählen -- sie rollen dahin, dein spähendes Auge verirrt sich

In der unendlichen Zahl.

Tausende steigen am Himmel empor, und tausende sinken

Nieder in Oceans Schooß… (Biester and Gedike 1)

Over 6000 new journals emerged between 1700-1790, with the "überschwemmung" only getting more severe in the last the last three decades of the 18th century (McCarthy 177). However, as implied by the "tausende sinken… Nieder in Oceans Schooß," the vast majority of these new publications would disappear just as quickly; successful journals typically had a run of 1-2 years, and it was even more common for a new publication to collapse after only a few issues. Periodicity likewise often suffered as publishers and editors struggled to keep subscriptions high enough (and payment of subscriptions regular enough) to defray the costs of publication, while simultaneously maintaining a flow of articles, either through soliciting articles or self-authorship, sufficient to sustain frequent publication (Fischer 19). By this metric, the *Braunschweigisches* was a solid if not remarkable success, running monthly without interruption for four years between 1788 and 1791, but still paling in comparison to the titans of the industry, such as Wieland's *Teutsche Merkur* (16 years), Friedrich Nicolai's *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (32 years), or the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (14 years). These numbers are somewhat misleading, however; the *Braunschweigisches* represented merely one iteration in a chain of related publications by its publishers, Joachim Campe, Johann Stuve and Ernst Christian Trapp. It continued a discussion begun in the mixed-media publication *Allgemeinen Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens*, a conversation which was once more picked up in 1792 after the

disappearance by the *Braunschweigisches Journal* by the *Schleswigsches Journal*--in the second case, the relocation was an attempt to escape the the heightened censorship pressures imposed by the Wöllnersche Religionsedikt of 1788, just as the the *Berlinische, Teutsche* and *Allgemeine* would all have “neue” affixed to their titles in the early 1790’s (Kerstin 277).

Information is scarce regarding the subscription numbers of the Enlightenment journals which emerged in the last three decades of the 18th century, and even less can be concretely stated about the specific makeup of the population of subscribers. Subscription took various forms in the 18th century: journals could be ordered through Pränumeration, a system of preorder unique to German book fairs, or via a monthly subscription directly through the publisher or second hand through a local bookstore, depending on location. In its first year, the *Braunschweigisches Journal* had 750 subscribers, a number which again marked it as a not-unheard-of success: the *Braunschweigisches* was dwarfed by *Merkur’s* peak of 2500 copies sold (although this number had already shrunk to a more comparable 800 copies by 1783), but its numbers were comfortably above 500 copies considered necessary for sustained publishing, putting it close to the ideal of 1000 sold, of which 750 would typically be subscribers (Kerstin 277, McCarthy 179, 188). 750 subscribers, however, should not be mistaken for 750 readers (or perhaps more accurately, a broader idea of “consumers”); the nature of the individual subscriber varied from private individuals to institutions such as booksellers, universities, Leihbibliotheken and Lesegesellschaften (Haefs 336). The exact make-up of the readership, real and imagined, will be the subject of speculation throughout this chapter, but at this point it is worth mentioning some basic statistics on literacy. Of the private individuals who subscribed, it is likely that many were themselves

fellow-authors: writing had become a viable source of (typically supplemental) income as early as 1730, with rapid expansion of the profession in the tail-end of the century, the number of authors increasing from 2000-3000 in 1766 to 10,000 by 1800 (McCarthy 176, Fischer 20). Beyond those actively employed as writers, another large percentage of the readership would have belonged to the traditional "Gelehrten," a vaguely circumscribed group which included Beamten, the clergy, and scholars, whose total numbers are estimated at 20,000 in 1773. The face of literacy was changing rapidly, however, and it is estimated that by 1800, 300,000 people were literate, or roughly 1.5 percent of the population (Wittmann 426). This change is more complicated than a simple expansion of the Gelehrten, and many factors contribute to the difficulty of assessing literacy at the end of the 18th century.[43] The largest hurdle to quantifying literacy is presented by the many different kinds of literacy which existed, all of which described very different competencies; it is estimated that a full 50% of the population had some basic ability to decipher letters, while 10% of the population read regularly, and only 1% read books (Rothe 89). Furthermore, literacy at this time did not necessarily describe the ability to read *and* write, as writing was to some extent a gendered activity reserved primarily for literate men, while many women could read without having been trained to write (Wittmann 426). Literacy and reading practices also varied based on location; generally literacy rates were far higher in the rapidly growing city centers than in rural areas (although cities still only accounted for 20% of the population); similarly, literacy rates

[43] Not least of which is the fact that the very idea of *statistics*, that is, a historical "freeze frame" in which a present moment is preserved was itself first in the process of becoming, and with it, the tools necessary to document these kinds of transformations. Surveys, censuses, and even address numbers were recent innovations (Walker 241, "Literatur der Gegenwart" 203).

tended to be higher in Protestant principalities, although much of the difference can be accounted for by those who exclusively read the Bible (Wittmann 423).

As will be explored below, changes in literacy not only make a retrospective analysis of the reading public difficult, it also led to great uncertainty for the editors and authors of the time as to whom, exactly, they were writing, a circumstance which was further complicated by the fact that the number or kind of subscription in no way represented the actual audience or reach of a particular journal. Reading culture of the late 18th century was still, by and large, a social endeavor. As detailed by Matthias Rothe in *Lesen und Zuschauen im 18. Jahrhundert*, writing and reading practices of the 18th century, as well as the distribution networks and patterns of written media, were all based upon a specific model, namely the personal letter. The personal letter had emerged at the end of the 17th century, prior to which the letter form had been reserved almost exclusively for military or courtly missives, and steadily grown in popularity during the intervening century. And yet, the designation of “personal” is misleading and cannot be understood in the modern sense: personal here indicated only that these were letters addressed from one private citizen to another, not that they were intended to be *private*. For although letters of this kind were addressed to an individual, they were simultaneously intended for a community, since letters were traditionally repeatedly read aloud in various social settings, as well as passed from person to person. It was understood that the striven-for intimacy of the personal letter was therefore nevertheless a public-intimacy in the modern sense; indeed, it was not even illegal to read mail intended for another person until 1794. This reality of reading practice was necessarily reflected in writing practices of the time, as “Briefe waren zuerst an den Einen und dann

an alle gerichtet" (Rothe 96).[44] This formulation must be inverted in the case of journals, that is: journals were in the first case directed at a vague sense of an "alle," and then in the second instance at the concrete individual. While the journal authors and editors did go to great lengths, trying to imagine the individual potential consumer (see below: "Gutdenkende Leute aus allen Ständen: Reaching for the Many"), their first intended recipient was always the public, the nation, the audience. This was not only a rhetorical flourish, but reflected in the individual subscribers to the journals, which again included not only private individuals but also "Journal- und Leihbibliotheken, Lesegesellschaften, gesellige Vereine, patriotische und ökonomische Sozietäten, Universitäten und Akademien" (Haefs 333). As a result, "ob Lesegesellschaften oder Privatbezug - ist davon auszugehen, daß die einzelnen Hefte von Zeitschriften jeweils mehrere Leser gefunden haben; die Auflagenhöhe gibt also nur bedingt Auskunft über das tatsächliche Ausmaß der Rezeption" (Fischer 18). The number of subscribers or even total journals sold could therefore only ever represent a fraction of the total reader base, and even the term "reader base" must be viewed as anachronistic, as the consumants of journals were by no means limited to those who could themselves read the written word from the page. Reinhard Wittmann describes this broader, non-gelehrte form of reading as "'wildes' Lesen, das naiv, vorreflexiv und undomestiziert, zum allergrößten Teil auch laut betrieben wurde," and notes that it was particularly prevalent in those rural areas in which literacy was lower, a type of reading which gained popularity as political interest increased surrounding the French Revolution (428, 429).

[44] There was also a critical assumed symmetry of the letter writing process, in that "jeder konnte Briefe senden und empfangen," a symmetry which will again be presupposed by the editors of journals, highlighting another parallel between the two mediums.

II. Monthly Bestsellers

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the “explosion” of new journals at the end of the 18th century is that it occurred without any significant technological innovations to the printing process: typesetting, printing, paper production had remained almost entirely unchanged for well over a hundred years (Fischer 10). What this meant was that monthly journals like the *Braunschweigisches Journal*, weekly newspapers and books were all printed in the same manner, and not dissimilar to the method established centuries earlier with the publishing of the Bible. It also meant that there were certain hard limits to the speed and cost at which any print media could be produced: cheaper paper of varying sizes could be used, and the degree of ornamentation could be varied, but the overall production process, cost per written word and general form of publication remained more or less inflexible. In the introduction to their handbook, Fischer, Haefs, Mix describe the format of the typical “literarisch-kulturellen und historisch-geographischen oder territorialen Zeitschriften:”

> Die Mehrzahl von ihnen [Zeitschriften/Journalen] wies Oktavformat auf, die originalbroschierten Umschlägewaren meist blau oder blaugrau, die Titel oft mit zeitüblichem typographischen Ornament (Putten, Ranken, Leisten, kleine symbolisch-allegorische Darstellunge etc.) geschmückt. Die Innenseiten des Umschlags sowie die letzte Umschlagseite erfüllten gleich mehrere Funktionen: Sie enthielten das Inhaltsverzeichnis der einzelnen Hefte, boten Bücheranzeigen und warben so für andere Titel des Druckers oder Verlegers der Zeitschrift; oft brachten sie Anzeigen anderer Buchhändler oder Hinweise und Mitteilungen auf Subskriptionen und Pränumerationen. (21)

The *Braunschweigisches Journal* fit this mold exactly: it was a modest book printed in Oktav with blue-grey covers and limited ornamentation (Figure 1). The "Oktav" format refers to the manufacturing process of journals and books: both forms of publishing were measured by the number of sheets (Bogen) required for publishing, while page number and size were dictated by the number of times each sheet was folded. As the name suggests, Oktav meant that each sheet is folded eight times, resulting in pages diminutive by today's standards: the *Braunschweigisches Journal* measured roughly 18 cm at the spine, with each printed page containing only around 200 words due to wide margins. Although the sizes of publications would not be standardized until nearly a hundred years later, this format closely approximated the *Berlinische Monatsschrift,* but was somewhat smaller than the large, bright pages of Wieland's *Teutsche Merkur*, most likely indicating a cheaper manufacturing process. Both the *Braunschweigisches Journal* and the *Teutsche Merkur* lacked the copper embossed portraits which emblazoned the bi-annual compendiums of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, for example in the attached likeness of Benjamin Franklin (Figure 2). Similarly, the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* also frequently featured special fold out sections foreign to the other two publications, providing more space for sheet music, a map, or an enlarged diagram (Figures 4, 5, 6). These copper embossings were a known selling point, with the editors writing in the "Vorrede" to the *Berlinische Monatsschrift,* "Der Gedanke der Verlegers, zuweilen (wenigstens vor dem ersten Stük jedes Bandes) ohne Erhöhung des Preises, einen saubern und getreuen Kupferstich von einem merkwürdigen verdienten und noch nicht durch Bildnisse bekannten Mann zu liefern, kann unmöglich anders als dem Publikum gefallen" (2). While the weight attached to these likenesses may seem strange to a modern audience, it is important to remember that this would have been the only means

for a large percentage of the readership to see any representation of the people in question, and this period also marked the height of miniature portraiture for the same reason. Still, that did not place the lofty practice above ridicule: in his compendium of the weekly *Der Wandswecker Bothe*, Matthias Claudius likewise provided a “saubern Kupfer” likeness of one “Lars Hochedeln” (Claudius 78, Figure 3).

It is possible that the choice to abstain from a copper emboss was not purely financial, but also had a philosophical motive: because the *Braunschweigisches Journal* was positioning itself as a purely pedagogical journal, embossings or inserts could have been viewed as unnecessary and/or ostentatious. Mix writes of the earliest journals for women:

> Da eine regelmäßige Geldausgabe für Literatur zur Zeit der Frühaufklärung als unüblich angesehn wurde, hatten die wöchentlichen Lieferungen einen bescheidenen Umfang von einem oder einem halben Bogen. Gemäß ihrer didaktischen Intention appelierten sie an die Ration und vermieden demonstrativ jede Form von Bücherluxus. (Mix 57-58).

Mix here is comparing Wochenschriften and Journale over and against the Almanachs of the time, which were specifically engineered as consumable objects, and quickly became objects of financial speculation on the part of investors and a means of conspicuous consumption for those who purchased them, the material form of the publications reflecting this with “immer extravagantere Formen” including but not limited to “ausgesuchte und matt getönte Papiere, kolorierte Kupfer, eingebundene Kupfer von bekannten Stechern, Lesebändchen, Gold- und Farbschnitte” (58). What this tension highlights is that *both* forms of publication, as already indicated by the dynamics of scale necessary to continued journal production, functioned as consumable objects adhering

to nascent dynamics of supply and demand. According to Benedict Anderson, books, beginning with the first Bible printed from the Gutenberg press (newspapers representing in this case merely an, in his words, “extreme form” of book) represented the “first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity” (34). Anderson’s reasoning for this is twofold: first he claims, quoting Febvre and Martin’s *The Coming of the Book*, that the production process introduced by the printing press “looked more like modern workshops than the monastic workrooms of the Middle ages… a business geared to standardized production.” What this expresses is that from its inception, book production has been production by assembly, production via interchangeable parts. So while very little had changed in the printing process by the end of the 18th century other than a rise in the number of individual productions, that process already anticipated the capitalist mode in significant ways. Anderson further argues that, in contrast to other early products of proto-industrial production such as textiles, sugar etc., a book is a discrete commodity: it “is a distinct, self-contained object, exactly reproduced on a large scale… each book has its own eremitic self-sufficiency.” Anderson suggests that in this light, the newspaper of the 19th and 20th centuries must simply be viewed as an “extreme form” of the book, sold on “a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity… [a] one-day best seller” (34-35). The continuity between the book form and 18th century journals such as the *Braunschweigisches Journal* is even more pronounced, as aside from the frequency of publication, no distinction was made in the form or manufacturing process: journals truly were “monthly best sellers,” purchased, rented or shared from emergent but in most cases extremely limited disposable incomes.

III. Selling Journals

The editors and authors of the day unquestionably recognized the journal's position as a commodity, and this status was both something they actively sought to foster, as well as a source of discomfort. A not inconsequential portion of each publication was dedicated to advertising for the journal itself, as well as other publications available through that publisher: even the modest *Braunschweigisches Journal* reserved the back cover of each issue for a list of such publications, including prices as well as where they could be purchased, while the inside of the front cover of each issue provided the exact cost along with subscription instructions to the *Journal* (Figure 7, 8). As previously mentioned, the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* presented its copper embossings as a "value add" to potential consumers, something which could be included without increasing the cost of an issue. The *Berlinische Monatsschrift* positioned itself as a serious, scholarly enterprise, and these embossings, along with the expanding inserts, were presented as pedagogical tools, a unique opportunity afforded by the medium of journals to make resources and information available to a broader audience. But, as indicated by the satirical embossing of "Präsident Hochedeln" (President High-nobility), the staging of these images had already become a bit too predictable by 1774 for them to be intended exclusively for the edification of the reading populace. Other publications were more brazen in their sales pitch: in the introduction to the 5th bound volume of *Blätter vermischten Inhalts* published in 1792, the publishers speak proudly of the acclaim their journal has found in the pages of their better known contemporaries such as *Die allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* and the fact that previous publication numbers have been inadequate to meet popular demand for issues. To remedy this, the initial "4 ersten vergriffenen Bände" were to be republished "auf Seine [the publisher's] Kosten" ("Vorrede" II). These reprints were to appear "alle 2 Monate ein Heft von 5 bis 6 Bogen…

welches, im blauen Umschlage, brochirt, hier an Ort und Stelle 4 gute Groschen oder 12 Grote kostet. Sechs Hefte machen einen Band. Einzelne Stücke kosten 5 gute Groschen oder 15 Grote, den Louisd`or zu Rthlr. rerechnet, weil man nicht anders als auf einen Ganzen Jahrgang pränumeriren kann." Finally, for those with "Zeit, Lust und Gelegenheit" to subscribe for a year in advance via Pränumeration, or for previous subscribers, "erhalten [Sie] das 10te Exemplar für ihre Bemühung unentgeltlich." In a scant two pages, the reader has thus been met with a flurry of advertising techniques which continue to this day: an endorsement from a famous source, the simultaneous stressing of popularity and scarcity, passing on the savings of no-shipping costs, and finally, one of the earliest instances of buy 9, get one free.

But as already indicated, the journal's status as a commodity, and the commodification of writing in general, was far from unproblematic. The unease with books-as-business is already visible in the wording of the previously quoted texts from the *Blätter Vermischten Inhalts* and the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*; the insistence that the republishing would be done "at the publisher's expense" or that the copper embossings were added "ohne Erhöhung des Preises," functioned not only or, perhaps, even primarily as a sales tactic in the minds of the editors, but also as an attempt to absolve themselves from a stink which was settling on the publishing *industry*, namely the accusation of greed. The fear of the accusation of greed is even more apparent elsewhere: in the 1787 "Vorbericht" to the *Blätter Vermischten Inhalts*, the editor declares "Die Fortdauer deselben [*Blätter Vermischten Inhalts*] hängt lediglich von der Unterstützung des Publicums ab. So lange wir Mitarbeiter und Leser haben, liefern wir ungefähr alle 2 Monate ein Heft von 5-6 Bogen, für einen Preis, der unmöglich geringer seyn kann" (8). As will be explored below, such direct appeals to the audience were

commonplace; what is important here is that this quote presents the journal purely as a service to the community, one which exists entirely at the discretion of the reading public, provided at as low of a cost as possible. This particular formulation intentionally blocks the possibility of speculating as to the motivations underlying the publication: the journal is not something *sold* to the public *by* the publishers and editors of journal, rather, it is a resource *demanded by* the public as a whole and provided only as a service.[45] Similarly, when Joachim Campe announced a new publishing project in the 1783 August issue of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, namely the previously mentioned predecessor to the *Braunschweigisches Journal,* the *Allgemeinen Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens: von einer Gesellschaft praktischer Erzieher*, he is quick to justify the announced cost per issue:

> ...ein Preis, der in Betracht der vielen Kosten, welche die weitläuftige Korrespondenz, das Hin- und Hersenden der Handschriften und das für die Preisschriften bestimmte hohe Honorar, verursachen werden, so ungewöhnlich gering ist, daß ein jeder, der da weiß, daß man ein Alphabet solcher Schriften jetzt fast durchgängig zu 1 Rthl.verkauft, leicht die Bemerkung machen wird, daß Gewinnsucht an dieser Unternehmung wohl keinen Theil haben könne. ("Plan zu einer allgemeinen Revision" 171)

As made clear by Campe's protestations, the underlying impetus for such an explanation is fear of the accusation of "Gewinnsucht;" it is this fear which prompts Campe to explain

[45] In this formulation, the publishers/editors attempt to assume a role not dissimilar to what E.P. Thompson said was retroactively ascribed to bakers/millers/farmers und paternalism, as discussed in Chapter 1: Markets. Thompson argues that it was this collective memory of food providers acting as servants to the community, similar to priests, which was the utopian core of the sustained, unified resistance to the onset of capitalism carried out by peasants over the course of centuries.

the publishing process, to remind the audience of the huge amount of (presumably costly) correspondence involved, the, in some cases, high honorariums which need to be paid, and the relatively modest asking price compared to other similar publications. And to a certain extent, the numerous self-justifications which crop up in journals when matters of price, circulation and sales are discussed seem valid: again, most journals only existed for one to two years, closing due to insufficient income or submission. And despite the editorial complaint of "high honorariums," compensation for writing articles was notoriously low, something only the most successful authors could afford to pursue as a full-time career, for most instead offering limited supplemental income to existing professions in academia or the state apparatus. Nevertheless, the universality of the defensive posture assumed by the editors of the Enlightenment journals suggests an equally broad level of critique or concern surrounding the ascendant media form, one which will be explored at length below.

IV Mercantile Monopoly vs. the Free Market of Ideas

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz who provides one of the most scathing, nuanced, albeit it internally inconsistent critiques of the journal publishing industry. Lenz's 1776 essay "Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken: von dem Verfasser der Wolken." "Verteidigung" is a bizarre work even within Lenz's experimental oeuvre; in 1775, Lenz had written the play, *Die Wolken*, a satirical play modeled loosely after Aristophanes' play of the same name. The play was never published; after manuscripts circulated amongst his friends and members of the Straßburger Sozietät, he was urged by Lavater, Schlosser and Goethe not only to forego release to the public, but to have the extant copies destroyed. Lenz initially refused, writing Schubart "Wehe über

mein Vaterland, wenn *Die Wolken* nicht gedruckt werden!" but eventually relented, something Sigrid Damm attributes to a combination of the influence of his friends, in particular his friend Sophie Laroche who was a mutual friend of Wieland, as well as the practical knowledge that he would soon be moving to Weimar and so perhaps releasing an excoriating play about one of the most powerful figures in its publishing industry was not tactically sound (Damm 925). Eventually, all copies were indeed burned, including a store of copies which had already been printed for sale by Heinrich Christian Boie's publishing house, as a last minute favor to his, by this time, frantic friend. Very little is known of the work, as no copies of the play have ever been discovered, with only a few pages from Lenz's Nachlass believed to be from an earlier version. What is known is that *Die Wolken* took aim at both Wieland and Nicolai, and that like its namesake, the protagonist is Socrates (this time a stand in for Wieland), a figure whom the few remaining pages depict as a scholastic fool interested only in deflowering one of his pupils. Unfortunately the destruction was thorough and did prevent the work's dissemination.

Lenz, however, worrying that copies had or would leak, decided to take the tactically ill-advised step to write an apology to Wieland for the unpublished work, the aforementioned essay "Verteidigung des Herrn W. gegen die Wolken: von dem Verfasser der Wolken."[46] In his review of the essay, Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart would later glow "so kühn, so steif und gutsinnig, so gedankenvoll und tiefsinnig, so im Feuerstrome ausgegossen, ist noch wenig geschrieben worden, wie hier diese drey Bogen" that "jeder Leser (versteht sichs, wer lesen kann) [wirds] gar leicht sehen, daß

[46] Lenz later had a change of heart on this essay, too, trying once again to suppress publication, in this case with no success.

diese Bogen einen unserer ersten und vortreflichsten Köpfe zum Verfasser haben. Feuer muß da seyn, wo einem die Flamm' ins Gesicht schlägt" (Schubart 462). As Schubart's repeated use of fire metaphors should suggest, "Verteidigung," is a bad apology, functioning less as a defense of Wieland (and recanting none of the criticism of Nicolai), and more as an apologia for the stillborn play. For while Lenz admits that he may have gotten carried away with his "aristophanic spleen," his primary goal in "Verteidigung" is to demonstrate that *Die Wolken* was not written in petty anger in response to negative reviews of his works by Wieland and Nicolai in *Teutsche Merkur* and *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (for an in depth discussion, see "Chapter 2: Theatrical Reception/Theoretical reception"), but rather sprang from a deep-seated concern for the state of the publishing industry as a whole. The problem is one of a consolidation of power: "Monopulien" have developed in which a few individuals have positioned themselves as author, publisher and reviewer, attempting thereby to control all aspects of the literary community. This is problematic, because "Poeten als Kaufleute anzusehen sind, von denen jeder seine Ware, wie natürlich, am meisten anpreist. Wie ungerecht, wenn da einer aus ihren Mitteln entscheiden, die letzte Stimme geben soll! Und wenn er ein Engel wäre, wie ungerecht!" (719). While the use of "Kaufleute" may seem like a slight to the literary profession, Lenz here is setting it up as the progressive, open-market alternative to mercantilist consolidation. Lenz acknowledges that "auch Dichter Leben und Othem haben müssen, und daß wohl niemand mit mehrerem Recht auf Belohnungen der Republik Ansprüche zu machen habe als ein Dichter, der ausgedient hat," and that indeed nothing is more tragic than a poet who has sacrificed so much to their craft "am Ende seines Lebens einen Karren ziehen, oder ein Mühlrad

umdrehen zu sehen wie Plautus," thereby tacitly acknowledging the social precarity of most authors at the end of the 18th century (718).[47]

For Lenz, the problem is rather what he sees as the prevalent monopolization of the industry, which is why Friedrich Nicolai, son of a publisher and simultaneously one of the German speaking world's most prominent novelists, editors and critics, is used metonymically to represent all that is wrong with the publishing industry:

> Was soll man aber zu einem Dichter sagen, der mehr Buchhändler als Dichter auf diesen Grund fortbaute, das heißt Kunstrichter aus ganz Deutschland zusammenmietete, um endlich auf diesen ungeheuren Obelisk sein Bild, mit desto mehrerer Sicherheit aufstellen zu können, der alle Offizinen und Druckerpressen auf gewisse Art in Anspruch nahm, um nichts in seinem Vaterlande ans Licht kommen zu lassen, das nicht von ihm und seinem Geschmacksrat vorher war gestempelt worden. (720-721)

Nicolai, like Wieland, Campe and many others, owned the publishing house which produced the journal of which he was chief editor, in addition to serving as a primary contributor of both original essays and reviews. Furthermore, in his capacity as editor, Nicolai was also responsible for both directly soliciting submissions from authors, as well as determining the fitness of the submissions once received--submissions which, in the case of reviews, were largely published anonymously. Lenz argues that this had necessarily produced a stifling atmosphere, one in which "alles, was Freiheit, Tugend

[47] As an immigrant from the lower ranks of the bourgeoisie, this was a social precarity Lenz knew only too well. Lenz never experienced financial success through his works, and depended instead on both the advocacy and sometimes direct support of more successful friends such as Goethe, Lavatar, Herder. Read today, "Vertheidigung" carries a darker significance, indicating his imminent rejection from the cultural center of Weimar, the collapse of his friendship with Goethe, and the eventual complete deterioration of his mental state.

und Ehre atmet," was suppressed "oder wenigstens… nicht zu Kräften kommen zu lassen, es sei denn, daß es zu seinen Privatabsichten diene," where those individuals, such as presumably himself, who "die Vorteile des Lebens verachteten, und aus zuweit getriebener Sorglosigkeit dafür sich auch die Mittel abschneiden ließen, ihren Brüdern nützlich zu sein."

Particularly troubling to Lenz, and heightening his belief that would-be authors were victim to an invisible cabal orchestrated by self-serving men such as Nicolai, was the fact that many of the reviews of the time were published anonymously. Lenz describes this apparatus as the "verborgenen Triebfedern" which "unser ganzes Vaterland in Bewegung setzt, und von niemand abhängig, alles von sich abhängig machen will," one in which "die Guten die Schlechten unterstützen," and collectively they form the "Geschmacksrat," without whose approval nothing can reach the light of day, to which Lenz poses the question, "das unser Tribunal? --von dem sich nicht appellieren ließe? --das die bewährten Zeugen unseres Werts? Warum nenne sie sich nicht? --Laß sie hervortreten, wenn das Vaterland ihnen glauben soll--" (721). This anonymity is inextricably tied to not only the greed of Nicolai, but to the anonymous authors themselves, suggesting that these "gemieteten Kritikern… nur lobten, weil sie sich sonst beim Volk nicht hätten erhalten können." The anonymity is not reserved only for the public (or for the victims of the harsh reviews, such as Lenz), but is so pervasive that the reviewers do not know each other, producing a situation:

> etwa wie jener geschickte Taschenspieler, der in eine Gesellschaft unbekannter Leute hereintrat von denen jeder glaubte, er sei der Freund des andern, und ihm alle mögliche Hochachtung bezuegte, die er denn so gut zu nutzen wußte, daß er mit dem ganzen Silberzeuge, auf dem sie gegessen, davon ging. (722-723)

Within this quote, Lenz's larger fears for the publishing industry become apparent: on the one hand, recognizing the necessity of a free market and a loosening of the points of access to publication, the need of a growing group of authors to financially support themselves, on the other, mistrusting the increasing anonymity which accompanies this process. For while he blames this anonymity on mercantilist, anti-competitive practices of an elite few, there is no overlooking the fact that as both the publishing industry and reading audience swelled, anonymity is an inevitable byproduct, with authors no longer knowing each other or the audience which they addressed.

It is in this context that Lenz begins his "defense" of Wieland, whom he paints as a man appalled by the "merkantilischen Joch" weighing so heavily on his countrymen (the masculine pronouns are intentional here, as will be explained below), establishing himself as a counter weight, building his own authoritative critical apparatus over and against the Nicolais of the nation, reviewers governed only by "kaufmännische Kunstgriffe," and "Buchhändlerinteresse." But the defense is muddled at best (and frequently simply further insulting), because Lenz lacks a clear vision as to what an alternative to the publishing industry as it exists would look like. Much of what Lenz proposes is simple nostalgia for a pre-capitalist era: reaching to the more distant past, he envies the freedom from financial concerns he imagines was enjoyed by the court bards accompanying the Scottish kings. Lenz also recollects fondly the recently-passed era in which "Abbt, Mendelssohn, Hamman und ihresgleichen gehört wurden, da war noch sicherer Richtscheid des Geschmacks derer, die ihr Gefühl an den aufwachenden Sängern ihres Vaterlandes übten" (720). In so doing, Lenz seems to construct overly simplistic binaries, in which greed and self interest are set over against nobility and selfless patriotism, the cowardice of anonymity against a manly self-assertion.

It would be unfair and inaccurate to characterize these critiques as purely regressive; as detailed in the first chapter, the use of utopian visions of the past can serve as a legitimate and often effective mode of critique, and Lenz's blending a modern call to patriotism[48] with a nostalgic sense of chivalry and nobility could almost be characterized with Caroline Levine as a "canny" usage of forms, that is, the recognition and manipulation of the overlap of several different society-organizing principles. As shown, Lenz astutely links the growing anonymity of the authors and reading public and the consolidation of the possible voices within the printing industry to its changing nature as a capitalist venture. However, unlike the peasants of the English Bread Riots or Levine's canny manipulators, Lenz's protests seem to have achieved nothing other than his own ruin, failing to produce temporal deceleration in a changing society. Some of this failure surely rests with Lenz's abiding lack of tact: at one point within his "defense" of Wieland, he offers the "dreiste Zumutung" that Wieland's "Mißtrauen… in seine Landsleute" even after what Lenz characterizes as his campaign to enlighten national taste, "zeigt, mein Gegner verzeihe mir, und meine Leser verzeihen mir, von einer Seele, die ihr erstes Gepräge ein wenig auslöschen lassen, und vielleicht durch physische, vielleicht durch ökonomische Ursachen zu Mißtrauen und Kleinmut herabgewürdiget worden" (717).[49] But what this passage primarily indicates are the

[48] It is worth noting that "patriotism" carried a very different valence in the late 18th century than the nationalist meaning it would gain in the 19th century (and continues to this day). In 18th century Germany, "patriotism" was often used to cloak subversive positions critical to the state. By positioning oneself as a patriot, it was possible to critique the political organization of the state while maintaining loyalty by characterizing these as merely the "concerns of a passionate citizen," of which Kant's essay "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" provides a perfect example. For more see Heinrich Bosse, "Patriotismus und Öffentlichkeit."

[49] The dig at Wieland's "physische" state indicates another important aspect of the conflict between the Sturm und Drangers and earlier Enlightenment figures such as Wieland and Nicolai, namely age; born in 1751, Lenz was only 25 at the time of writing "Vertheidigung," where as his targets were both a positively ancient 43. Age had special significance to the Sturm und Drangers, in part because of the influence of French materialism: youth, vitality, genius were all

conflicting impulses within Lenz's critique: on the one hand, he wishes to restore the "wahren Adel des Herzens" of literary production and evaluation in the truest sense of the word, that is, to make the production and consumption of literature the purview of a privileged few chosen from birth through natural talent. On the other, Lenz makes frequent oblique references to the newfound maturity of the people of the German nation, an assertion which surfaces every time he is forced to justify his request of Wieland to abdicate his self-appointed throne as the arbiter of taste. According to this line of reasoning, Wieland was at one point justified in his appropriation of the "unleidlichen Wir," but that the public has evolved to such an extent that "sein Wir nicht mehr gilt, als jedes andern ehrlichen Mannes von seinem Wert…" (722). This tension becomes even more pronounced in light of Lenz's alternative to the Nicolaiischen Geschmacksrat:

> Wem soll also das Urteil über uns zustehen, wenn es nicht dem zusteht, für den wir da sind, dessen Beifall uns leben und atmen lässet, ich meine dem ganzen Volk. Ich nehme hier das Wort im gemilderten Verstande, so daß ich den Pöbel, der weder Dichter noch Gelehrte anders als von Hörensagen kennt, davon ausschließe. Dagegen zähle ich auch die Väter des Volks zum Volke, die wie alle Helden und großen Männer des Altertums auch in ihren Vergnügungen sich bis zum Volk herunterlassen, da sie wohl wissen, daß dieses von jeher das einzige und höchste Mittel war, sich seiner freiwilligen Treue und Ergebenheit in allen auch den schwersten Erfordernissen zu versichern. (719)

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linked, provoking Schubart to wonder aloud in his review if 40 is the new "Greisenalter des dichters," before reminding himself that in some instances (Homer, Klopstock) people remained productive well beyond this point, and that even Wieland's imagination is not yet "aufgetrocknet," and that his latest poetry in the *Teutsche Merkur* still shows indications of "lebensfeuer" (462).

This passage is both incredibly murky and key to Lenz's alternative; in the initial egalitarian statement, the new judges of taste are simply the recipients of the media, namely "das ganze Volk." But this "ganze" is immediately qualified, excluding a particular, unnamed "Pöbel," before then reintroducing an even more vaguely characterized group of "Väter des Volks" to the judging body. The problem is that while Lenz believes it should be left to "the people" to judge, he has no faith in their ability to do so: "Dieses Volk muß aber geführt werden, da es sonst in seinem Geschmack eben so unbestimmt und schwankend sein würde, als es in seinen Handlungen zu sein pflegt…" He seeks, in other words, to fuse the egalitarian and radically democratic impulses of the Enlightenment with the restoration of an imagined past in which artistic judgement lay in the hands of "Philosophen, die das ganze Reich der Wissenschaften durchwandert und von diesen Wanderungen mit den schärfsten und reichhaltigsten Einsichten und dem feinstem Geschmack, aber auch mit dem unverdorbensten zärtesten Gefühl, für alle Rechte der Menschheit," men (and again, necessarily men) like "Herodot, Solon, Lykurg… Demokrit und Pythagoras" (720). Lenz continues, "Diesen und nur der vereinten Stimme dieser überlasse man es, ein Endurteil über den Dichter zu fällen, der mit dem Volk stehen und fallen muß," once again combining a nominally populist notion of the people, with the unanimous will of philosopher kings/cultural critics.

Lenz can perhaps be excused for not providing more detail on exactly *how* this interaction between "das Volk" and "die Philosophen" will play out, as in Lenz's theory of society, this interplay represents not only the ideal through which a national "Geschmack" is to be formed, it is the essence of all statecraft and the very sinews of society:

> [Das Volk] muß sich in einem Punkt mit dem verfeinerten und bessern Geschmack der Edlern anschließen können, das einzige Band zwischen Großen und Kleinen, Beherrschern und Untertanen, das einzige Geheimnis aller wahren Staatskunst, ohne welches alle bürgerliche Verhältnisse und Beziehungen auseinander fallen, ohne welches der Bürger immer den Staat als den Unterdrücker und der Staat den Bürger als den Rebellen ansehen wird.

And while these formulations may seem wildly utopian, Lenz is insistent that such circumstances can and have existed; again, Abbt, Mendelssohn and Hamman provided such a voice 20 years prior. And more than that, Lenz sees the German "nation" as uniquely positioned to realize the promise of an enlightened republic governed by an educated elite, and it is this very real possibility which makes the practice of anonymous reviews so troubling to him:

> Ich begreife aber nicht, wie unter diesen Voraussetzungen von Privatabsichten freie Gelehrte gezwungen sein sollten, ihren Namen zu verstecken, in einem Lande, wie Deutschland, das durch soviel besondere Staatssysteme und Verbindungen eben denen darin befindlichen Gelehrten die größte Freiheit, ihre Meinung herauszusagen, und keinen weitern Zusammenhang läßt, als der der Wahrheit so vorteilhaft ist, den sie gemeinschaftliche Diener einer und derselben Wahrheit haben, sie auszubreiten, und zu befördern. Wenn in einem Lande, wo wenig oder gar keine politische Rücksichten zu nehmen sind, wo Luther allein dem Aberglauben einer halben Welt die Spitze bieten konnte, da er in jedem andern bald seinen Platz im Tollhause oder auf den Galeeren gefunden haben würde, wenn da nich Freiheit zu denken und zu schreiben herrschen soll, wo soll sie denn herrschen? (724-725)

Not only is Germany the only place in the world in which Luther could have nailed his theses without ending his life in a madhouse or prison, not only are the German lands blessed with the unique "Staatssysteme," provided by Frederick II, under which Gelehrte are offered untold freedom, within Germany the pursuit and dissemination of the Truth has been raised to an imperative, the only acceptable goal of any scholar. Within this context, the *only* reason imaginable to Lenz for the anonymous reviews and for the consolidation of publishing/editing/reviewing into a single body are "Privatabsichten," the threat of mercantilist monopolies. Lenz's dismissal of the very real problems of state censorship and material pressures which were producing the publishing climate seem to stem less from naivety and more from desperation. "Vertheidung" is a plea to his contemporaries; if not here, where? If not now, when? Lenz even tries to partially walk back his unrelenting derision of Nicolai, who he still values as "Buchhändler und anfänglichen Liebhaber und Beförderer der deutschen Literatur, auch in seinem N. als unterhaltenden Romanendichter."[50] It was never Lenz's intent to stem the tide of journal media, as he himself was "von dem Nutzen gelehrter Anzeigen zu sehr überzeugt." Instead, what Lenz's fears and hopes within "Vertheidigung" indicate is the extreme flux

[50] Nicolai clearly relished his role as a thorn in the side of the serious young men of Sturm und Drang, writing biting critiques of their work in addition to penning satirical novels such as *Freuden des jungen Werthers*. Nicolai ignored Lenz's insults for a full four years before publishing a devastating rebuttal in the 1780 Anhang to the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek.* In this article, he refers to Lenz as someone "von dem eine Zeitlang einige Leute ein gewaltiges Lärm machten, als ob er, wer weiß was für ein Genie wäre," indicating not so subtly Lenz's precipitous fall into obscurity during the intervening years (774). Nicolai then promises that he is not going to bother defending himself and instead will limit his defense to his friend Wieland, a promise he keeps, before quoting at length a rather embarrassing passage from "Vertheidigung" in which Lenz fails to muster precisely this kind of restraint, with Lenz listing the kinds of nasty things he *could* say about Wieland's recent operetta but *won't* (it bears repeating, within the framework of what is possibly the world's worst apology/defense). Like Lenz, Nicolai plays up the age difference, calling Lenz a "rüstigen Knaben" and noting that it was "sehr possierlich" of Lenz to believe himself the equal of a great man like Wieland. Nicolai ends with a final barb at Lenz's "verfehlte Schakespearische Manier," a blow which would have particularly stung the young playwright.

of the current moment: Lenz both welcomes the advent of a free market of ideas and criticizes the old, top-down model of control represented by older representatives of the Enlightenment such as Wieland and Nicolai. At the same time, there is a strongly anti-democratic bent to his writing, a fear of the anonymous "Pöbel," a sense of loss for the close intercommunication within the Gelehrten community, and a nostalgia for the imagined bygone security of the royal artist. Lenz advocates for free expression and transparency in the public sphere while simultaneously dreaming of wise aristocratic philosopher kings who will guide the German people into a new era.

V. An Epistemological Threat and a New Temporality

Criticism of journals was not limited to their entanglement in capitalist modes of production. There also existed a simultaneous unease with the kind of writing which occurred between those grey-blue covers, namely the journal article. To return to the inaugural January edition of the *Braunschweigisches Journal*, this issue was divided into nine separate articles, ranging between 4 to 26 pages in length and, as indicated by the journal's full title, *Braunschweigisches Journal philosophischen, philologischen und pädagogischen Inhalts*, the journal dealt with topics similar to those found in the dozens of other monthly journal which had sprung up in the past ten years: orphanages, secret societies, religious freedom, the best means of combating superstition, reviews of recent literature, travel literature, and "news."[51] The *Braunschweigisches Journal* attempts to distinguish itself from other journals in two ways: first, through the area of expertise of its

[51] The idea of "news" will be explored in greater detail below: at this juncture, it is worth simply noting that the concept differed from its contemporary usage in that it included *relative* as well as *absolute* newness. The news was therefore not only events which were temporally "new," but also included any knowledge which could be unknown to the audience reading it.

founding editors, which included Ernst Christian Trapp, Johann Stuve and most importantly Joachim Heinrich Campe, all of whom were noted pedagogues. As previously mentioned, the journal was published by Campe's Verlag der Schulbuchhandlung, whose other noted publications included encyclopedias, pedagogical handbooks, and textbooks designed for school instruction, further marking the journal as an instructional resource. Nevertheless, the "pädagogische" aspect of the journal also proves a rather thin distinction: for while the journal did certainly foreground education in a way that not all Enlightenment journals did, in general pedagogy *was* a central concern of the Enlightened journals as a whole, and as previously noted, the range of topics often remained close to that of publications such as the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* or the *Teutsche Merkur*. In part, this lack of distinction was simply the result of mutual authorship: all three editors had been and would continue to be frequent contributors to other journals such as the *Berlinische Monatsschrift,* just as the authors featured there would often appear in the pages of the *Braunschweigisches Journal*. The second differentiating feature of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* was its titular link to a specific region, namely Braunschweig. And yet, while the specific space demarcated was relatively unique, the act of spatial differentiation itself was one shared by nearly all new publications: whether a city like Frankfurt or Berlin, a region like Silesia or Braunschweig, or just the ill-defined cultural, linguistic and geographic "space" of "Teutschland," in almost all cases the journals linked themselves explicitly to a specific place.[52]

[52] It is worth noting that there exists a rather nebulous distinction between Enlightenment journals with regional markers, and the so-called "Territorialzeitschriften," as described by Wihelm Haefs in his article of the same name. Territorialzeitschriften were regional journals or newspapers which worked towards the enlightenment of local populations. Unlike the Braunschweigisches Journal, Berlinische Monatsschrift, Teutsche Merkur, and the other similar journals which are the

But what truly sets the first edition of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* apart and makes it of particular interest in comparison with its contemporaries is its intensive grappling with the media form. A discussion of method and intent at the beginning of a new journal was itself far from unique. As Fischer, Haefs and Mix note:

> Entscheidender Indikator der sich wandelnden Verhältnisse ist das Reflexivwerden des Mediensystems ab etwa 1760/1765: In zunehmendem Maße entsteht in Zeitungen und Zeitschriften ein Gespräch über Zeitungen und Zeitschriften, so daß sich, mindestens für die Phase der Spätaufklärung, treffend von einem fortwährenden "dialogue des journaux" sprechen läßt. (15)

Nearly all new publications of this era included a manifesto-like essay by the editors as the first article, in which the editors would explore methodology, what they believed their objects of study would be, and for whom they believed they were writing.[53] What sets the *Braunschweigisches Journal* apart is therefore not the existence of such a discourse, but rather the length of this discussion: in addition to the meanwhile standard manifesto (here titled "Von der Absicht und den Gegenständen dieser Zeitschrift"), it also includes

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primary focus of this chapter, journals such as *Das Journal von und für Franken*, *Schwäbisches Magazin von gelehrten Sachen*, *Westphälischischen Beyträgen zum Nutzen und Vergnügen* and hundreds of others tended to be the production of either very small groups of all local authors, or primarily the work of a single author, as opposed to the collectives typical of the larger publications. As such, their run times were short even in comparison with those of the more nationally/internationally oriented Enlightenment journals. Furthermore, their content tended towards the empirical, practical and historical, instead of the pedagogical, philosophical and political, with more space devoted to rudimentary statistics, economic reports, as well as local artistic production. But more than this, the type of regional-focus present in the Territorialzeitschriften also represented a different philosophical outlook: the authors and editors still "fühlt[en] sich der deutschen Gelehrtenrepublik zugehörig" and in many ways attempted to function as a bridge between the local and the (inter)national, but at the same time, "Sie wollen… gleichermaßen Landespatriotismus und Reichspatriotismus vermitteln," and "dient nicht zuletzt der kollektiven Identitätsversicherung einer Gruppe von meist nur lokal oder regional bekannten Autoren" (Haefs 331, 332). The attitude of region/nation first produced writing which was "eher skeptisch bis ablehnend" of the kind of cosmopolitan-universalism advocated for by a more "radical" enlightenment, as represented by Wieland, Nicolai and Mendelssohn.

[53] As will be explored below, this self-reflexive writing about writing is constitutive to the emergent understanding of time as a series of all-encompassing now-moments.

a letter written by Christian Garve to Joachim Campe, “Ein Einwurf wider die Nützlichkeit periodischer Schriften,” in which Garve voices concerns over both the ubiquity of journals as well as their fundamental mode of knowledge production, as well as Campe’s rebuttal, “Beantwortung diese Einwurfs.” Together, these three articles account for nearly 50 of the initial issue’s 130 pages, and offer one of the most in depth discussions of the journalistic medium as it existed at the end of the 18th century. Within this discussion, three determining aspects to the new media emerge; a new temporality, a new audience, and a new writing form. These three elements are more than interconnected; they are intrinsically linked, mutually substantiating aspects of an indivisible whole. The new, empty, but also self-reflexive, understanding of time is the space in which the journal article exists. It denotes both a unifying, universal now-time experienced simultaneously by all people, a universal experience journals as a medium were helping to establish, as well as reflecting a diverse, individualistic and relative experience of time as something intensely local and always in flux. The short, iterative, heterogenous writing forms within the journal reflected this new fascination with the current, with relative and transitory knowledge, stressing the need for multiple-perspectival, collaborative writing efforts. Temporality and audience thereby blend, with the writing form bending to the will of an unseen, heterogenous Many whose experiences journalists sought to capture as well as control: the irregularity and unknowability of the audience was viewed as a source of limitless potential, but one which needed to be carefully harnessed, educated and contained. The ephemeral, reading/listening/conversing public, real and imagined was therefore in a constant process of writing and being written by the journalistic form, all within a new, self-reflexive understanding of now-time. The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to a discussion of these three constitutive elements of the Enlightened

journal medium at the end of the 18th century. While some attempt will be made to speak to each aspect individually, to explore its own unique character and contribution to the medium as a whole, it is impossible to create absolute boundaries between the three elements. Consequently, their discussion will likewise be iterative and recursive by necessity, reflecting their own interconnection.

A new understanding and concern for the present moment and the relativity of time permeates all three introductory pieces. The combined editors write in “Von der Absicht” that while the interrelated sciences of pedagogy, philosophy and philology are the tools appropriate for “die gesittete Menschheit dermalen in Europa steht,” they are quick to concede that this knowledge is not universally applicable, and that:

> Es hat freilich Zeiten und Länder gegeben und giebt dergleichen noch in Asia, Afrika und Amerika, wo man von keinem philologischen Studio… wußte und weiß und doch -- wenn wir von den conventionellen Vorzügen abstrahiren und nur aufwahren und wesentlichen Menschenwerth sehen -- mit unter gar edle und trefliche Menschen bildete und noch bildet. (3)

The editors explicitly link these “times and places” with those of ancient Greece, the paradigm of high cultural production in the 18th century, in order to underscore how seriously this cultural relativity is to be taken: there exist and have existed other worlds in which the knowledge contained within the pages of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* would be of little value. However, “jene Zeiten sind nicht die unsrigen; in jenen Ländern wohnen nicht wir, die wir in dem ablaufendem achtzehnten Jahrhundert und mitten in Europa unter einer zahllosen Menge neuer Verhältnisse und neuer Bedürfnisse, also auch andere Arten der Menschencultur und andere Mittel dazu;” drawing lines of demarcation around both the geographical area of Europe, and the time of the

“ablaufendem achtzehnten Jahrhundert,” allows the editors to make the claim that *under these circumstances*, “Bei uns sind Litteratur und Wissenschaft das vorzüglichste, das allgemein beliebte, also auch das unentbehrlichste dieser Mittel,” with the “bei uns” once again underscoring the relative, relational value of this approach. This emergent idea of something like a Gegenwart, that is, a Jetztzeit, a *temporal* space which is both shared but individually experienced was new, and this newness can be felt in the proximity it shared with a lingering *spatial* understanding of Gegenwart: in a special edition of the *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, Johannes Lehmann and others created a collection of essays which sought to explore the changing face of Gegenwart at the end of the 18th century by contrasting it with publications from the late 17th century. As Lehmann notes in the introduction, “Editorial: ‘Gegenwart’ im 17. Jahrhundert? Zur Frage literarischer Gegenwartsbezüge vor der ‘Sattelzeit’” even by the end of the 18th century, “‘Gegenwart’ wird bis zum Ende des letzten Drittels des 18. Jahrhunderts... noch allermeist gebraucht im Sinne von Anwesenheit, Präsenz, im selben Raum sein, mit dem eigenen Körper (beziehungsweise der Seele) auf die räumlich anwesende Umgebung wirken können” (110).

The idea of Gegenwart prior to the late 18th century was intimately linked to the concept of an ever-present (gegenwärtig) God: what this meant was that there was no sense of the “now” as a discrete (temporal) place. As discussed in the first chapter, Koselleck’s famous distinction stipulated that prior to the “Sattelzeit,” people lived in a state of “eschatological time,” that is, in the no-time which existed between creation and the end of days. It is through this distinction that Koselleck is able to explain what the modern viewer perceives as the wild anachronicity of Albrecht Altdorfer’s *Alexanderschlacht*, both in the intentionally anachronistic inclusion of banners carried by

the troops indicating the number of soldiers who will soon die in the coming battle, as well as the unintentionally anachronistic attire of the troops themselves, who are dressed, not like 3rd century B.C. Greek and Persian troops, but rather as 16th century A.D. Austrian and Ottoman soldiers, thereby merging the ancient and modern conflicts into a single struggle. Rather than indicating a mistake, what this reveals is a particular understanding of time. For Altendorfer, the battle between Alexander and the Persians and the Austrian conflict *were* the same, both part of the same eternal conflict between Christianity and the forces of darkness, a perfect expression of the time-less quality of eschatological time. Four years later, Benedict Anderson likewise picked up the thread of eschatological time in *Imagined Communities*. Anderson noted that in the traditional world, time did not progress, but rather was prefigured, cyclical; every event indicated other events which had happened and would happen again, not in the progressive linkage of cause and effect but in the return of the perpetually same and as a result, the moment of existence itself was less a span of time than it was a single recurring day. Quoting Auerbach, Anderson highlights the a-temporal nature of prefigured time; that which occurs “is simultaneously something which has always been, and will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal, something omnitemporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly event” (24). From the divine perspective posited by the traditional world, time is by necessity static. God is everywhere and every-when simultaneously, and the future, to the extent that it can be said to exist at all, is merely a substantiation of that which has been prophesized (as will be explored shortly, it is therefore less a future [Zukunft] and more a posterity [Nachwelt], something which follows and is already fixed). In this way, Anderson is able to explain the seemingly anachronistic dress of biblical figures in

religious iconography, for example “the Virgin Mary… figured as a Tuscan merchant’s daughter” in stain glass; while the artisans creating these works were blind to the “inaccuracy” of their creations, the nature of the “error” would have been incomprehensible and ultimately rejected (22). The Virgin Mary wasn’t a person who had existed for a certain length of time during a specific period in the historical past, but rather an eternal archetype who had been, was, and would always be in an ever returning cosmic dance. Time in traditional society was therefore a “juxtaposition of the cosmic-universal and the mundane-particular,” a mix which to the modern observer appears as a heterogeneous mish-mash of disparate elements but to those who experienced it was simply the symbolically charged eternal presence of the divine.

To summarize: in the traditional world, time did not exist in any modern sense. The sun rose, the sun set, the stars turned, the seasons changed, but one did not live life *in* time, that is, life was not imagined as a journey through time/history, with each second, minute, hour, day, building on the past, a series of unique nows stacking towards infinity. Instead, the world was as frozen in amber, a crystalline edifice of divine will. What fascinates Koselleck and Anderson therefore is the temporalization of time. Koselleck attempts to reveal this shift by describing Friedrich Schlegel’s reception of Altdorfer’s work some 300 hundred years later “Schlegel weiß das Bild sowohl von seiner eigenen Zeit zu unterscheiden wie auch von der antiken Zeit, die es darstellen vorgibt. Die Geschichte hat für ihn eine spezifisch zeitliche Dimension, die bei Altdorfer offensichtlich fehlte” (18-19). Why is it that in the mere 300 years separating Schlegel and Altdorfer seemingly more time has passed than in the milenia separating Altdorfer

and Alexander the Great?[54] Before attempting to address the question of why and how time became temporalized, it is worth noting that rather than an abrupt rupture, the dilation of something known as "the present" was a long process, and its becoming is very much visible in Campe's defense of journalism. One of Campe's chief rebuttals to Garve's critique is the timeliness of journals:

> [I]ch bin versichert, daß die Journale, trotz ihrer ephemerischen Existenz, auch dadurch zur Erweiterung und Aufklärung des öffentlichen Ideenkreises, mehr geleistet haben, als manches vortrefliche literrarische Kunstwerk, welches vielleicht noch dann in Bibliotheken prangen wird, wann die Journale schon längst den Weg alles Makalaturs werden gegangen seyn. (34)

The reason Campe gives for the greater effectiveness of journals over books in the spread of Enlightenment ideals is "daß darin mehr, als in andern Werken, Rücksicht auf die jedesmaligen Bedürfnisse der Zeit genommen wird" . So even as the physical form of the journal rots as "Makalatur," the ideas contained within have achieved more influence due to their "jedesmaligen" relevance. "Der Werth einer jeden Art von Aufklärung und Belehrung ist, wie der Werth aller andern Dinge in der Welt, relativ, d.i. er steigt oder fällt in Beziehung auf unser jedesmaliges grösseres oder geringeres Bedürfniß oder in Beziehung auf den größern oder geringern Nutzen, den wir davon haben" (41). Just as pedagogy, philosophy and philology are of *relative* importance and utility to those peoples inhabiting Europe at the end of the 18th century, the journal's value lies is in its ability to continually adjust to a constantly changing "present." The newness of the idea can be felt in the terms used: Campe here does not talk about a stabilized, singular

[54] For a detailed look at *why* temporality was changing in the late 18th century, see Chapter 1, "The Disappearing World: Labor"

Present, but rather refers repeatedly to the “jedesmalig,” or “in every instance/moment” useful character of the journalistic medium. The Present is still elusive, something which must be described quite literally as a series of individual moments, each with its own unique “Bedürfnisse.” Campe tries to illustrate the idea of relative, temporal value through metaphor:

> Wer in einem ganz vorzüglich mückenreichen Sommer uns ein Mittel lehrte, diese Insecten uns vom Leibe zu halten, der würde sich zuverläßig weit verdienter um uns machen, als ein anderer, der uns zu eben der Zeit mit einem Arcanum an die Hand geben wollte, wie man Tiger, Löwen, Flußpferde und Elephanten bändigen könne. Und doch ist die Mücke nur ein erbärmlich kleines Object, der Elephant ein ungleich größeres! Also nicht das Object einer Belehrung an sich, sondern die Beziehung, die dasselbe auf unser Wohlseyn oder auf unser Uebelbefinden hat, bestimmt allein den verhältnißmäßigen Werth derselben. (42)

The intent of this passage is clear: by comparing the seemingly insignificant problem of mosquito bites with being rent limb from limb by the world’s most fearsome animals, Campe is able to give an example where the *relative* value of knowledge is more significant than its *absolute* value. But the example provided nevertheless feels awkward to a modern reader: the difference between the dangers of a mosquito and a lion is less one of temporal than it is of spatial distance--it’s not as if there is a lion season in Braunschweig. However, the apparent clunkiness of Campe’s metaphor, rather than a failure of imagination, provided a necessary bridge to a particular understanding of time. In order for temporal difference to be understood, it was necessary to link it to spatial differences: on the one hand, the geographic difference between the Serengeti and the

Norddeutsches Tiefland, on the other the difference in scale between a hippopotamus and a mosquito. These differences were manifest, imaginable in a way that local, temporally situated challenges facing individuals were not.

Part of the problem with understanding temporal difference in the way which is necessary to construct a temporal space known as “die Gegenwart,” a present which is “jedesmalig,” continually presenting new, unique challenges, is that this concept is fundamentally contingent on rupture with all that has preceded it. Heinz-Dieter Kittsteiner deals with this problematic in *Naturabsicht und Unsichtbare Hand*, arguing that in the late 18th century, “Erfahrungsraum” and “Erwartungshorizont” were irrevocably blasted apart (34). This severing of expectation and experience occurred as the daily experience of the individual (“Erfahrungsraum”) continually confounded the realm of what was previously considered possible (“Erwartungshorizont”). Instead of experiencing life as an eternal return, the cosmic-universal recreated infinitely in the local and specific, new experiences create new expectations for the future, rendering all past experience irrelevant. Where history once had served as the ultimate teacher (historia magistra), with the past dictating both the present and future, in the modern it is within the present that the future is decided, a future which will be unlike either the past or the present in which it is created. This has fundamental implications for the kind of knowledge which is valued: instead of the historical, a premium is placed on new, relative, relational knowledge. To return to the earlier quote from Campe, “Der Werth einer jeden Art von Aufklärung und Belehrung ist, wie der Werth aller andern Dinge in der Welt, relativ, d.i. er steigt oder fällt in Beziehung auf unser jedesmaliges grösseres oder geringeres Bedürfniß.” The value of knowledge is determined by the spatial *and* temporal location of the individual in relation to the rest of the ever changing world. And while Campe

concedes that “viele geistige und sittliche Bedürfnisse der Menschen von Jahrhundert zu Jahrhundert fast immer die nemlichen, und werden die nemlichen bleiben, so lange die Menschen Menschen sind,” what concerns him is another species of need, needs which “wechseln wie die Moden; entstehen und verschwinden oft eben so schnell als diese… Heute ist es daher diese, morgen jene Grille, von der er [der Mensch] sich irre leiten läßt; heute entsteht dadurch diese, morgen jene Modethorheit; Modeverblendung!” (42, 42-43).[55] If the problems facing the public are indeed in a constant state of flux, what better medium to address them than one which can change as rapidly as the challenges do? In order to provide information that is useful to relational, relative problems, Campe holds that it is necessary for the “Gemeinnützigkeit strebender Schriftsteller” to focus on the “sittliche Bedürfnisse” of his “Zeitgenosse,” rather than concern himself with the “Nachwelt,” “deren mögliche Bedürfnisse er nur vermuthen kann” (21). It is therefore not only historical knowledge, but additionally knowledge which was previously believed to be a-historical, a-temporal, eternal truths of life and existence which is called into question. The constantly shifting face of reality and the emergence of “die Gegenwart,” have destabilized a particular concept of Truth, and made its pursuit in Campe’s eyes a largely fruitless endeavor.

This desire to find the appropriate cure for the “Modethorheiten” of one’s contemporaries highlights another important change linked to the emergence of a “Gegenwart:” the dilation of the present moment, the creation of a “now” in which

[55] The repeated use of “Mode” to describe the afflictions affecting the modern audience is significant, as the very idea of fashion itself was a relatively recent occurence, with the first fashion journals having appeared in Germany in the 1780s. As Wolfgang Cilleßen defines the concept in his essay “Modezeitschriften,” “Der Begriff *Mode* bezeichnet… das Phänomen des permanenten Wandels der allgemein akzeptierten Kenntnisse und Wertvorstellungen und daraus resultierender gesellschaftlicher Verhaltensweisen, des Wandels des gängigen ästhetischen Geschmacks” (205).

humankind exists, is also the condition of possibility for the existence of free will. If free will exists, it can only exist in the here and now, in the moment to moment decisions made by the acting individual. The eschatological time of traditional society specifically precludes this possibility: the past is set, the future is known, and daily experience functions merely as a substantiation of the divine plan. It is only with the rupture of the present from the past, combined with the unknowability of the future, that free will becomes thinkable.[56] The reality, or at least possibility, of shaping the future brings with it moral imperatives, as the individual grapples with how best to intervene in the current constellation of the present in order to ensure the best possible future outcome. For Campe, this is the ultimate duty of the journalist:

> Da ist es nun zwar die Pflicht eines jeden gemeinnützigen Schriftstellers überhaupt aber doch ganz besonders und recht eigentlich die eines Journalisten… von seinem Standorte aus rund um sich her zu blicken; das Thun und Lassen der innerhalb seines Gesichtskrieses ihr Wesen treibenden Zeitgenossen ruhig, unbefangen und scharf zu beobachten; zu bemerken, wann und wie sie von Zeit zu Zeit, ohne daß es ihnen ahndet, auf neue Irrwege gerathen oder alte, beinahe schon begrasete, von neuem wieder aufzutreten beginnen; ihnen dann sofort wohlwollend zuzurufen, sie über ihre Verirrung zu belehren, vor den Folgen derselben zu warnen, und sie so auf den Weg der Vernunft noch zu rechter Zeit zurückzuführen. (43)

This passage shows all of the constitutive elements of the new understanding of Gegenwart. First, it demonstrates the intrinsic self-reflexivity of the modern

[56] For a further discussion of the reality of free will, see Chapter 2: Synthesizing Free Will and Material Determinism: A failed Resolution of Conflicting Enlightenment Ideals.

understanding of Gegenwart: Gegenwart is defined as an ever-changing present, recognized as unique from all preceding moments by the individual experiencing it. Second, this passage shows the fundamentally collective, aggregate nature of Gegenwart: the Gegenwart exists as the sum total of the web of all interactions between individuals, collectively determining an uncertain future. Together these two features combine to create a third aspect of the Gegenwart, what Johannes Lehmann refers to as the Gegenwart's intrinsic "Implikationen für Politik und Öffentlichkeit," in his article "'Literatur der Gegenwart' als politisches Drama der Öffentlichkeit" (193). By shifting to local perspectives and emphasizing individual agency, the creation and control of the future is no longer strictly the purview of the state through policy creation. Of course, institutional methods of control not only continued to exist but expanded radically in scope and societal penetration at this time, as indicated perhaps most famously by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*: the idea of progressive time and a changeable future simultaneously exposed society to be an infinitely mutable object, something which could be squeezed or coerced into almost any form. But parallel to (and, as Lehmann points out, not entirely distinct from) institutional forms of regulation and control emerges not only the possibility of influence from "below," but also the moral duty to enact social change where possible. This is what Campe means when he refers to the "Pflicht eines jeden gemeinnützigen Schriftsteller:" it is the patriotic duty of not only every author, but as will be shown in the following section, potentially every person within society to record, reflect and offer suggestions towards the improvement of the current moment. For this reason, Lehmann defines the patriotism of this era as "[d]ie Verhältnisse der Gegenwart zu verbessern, Missstände zu beobachten und auf sie mit Vorschlägen zu antworten" ("Literatur der Gegenwart" 207).

It is within this new sense of Gegenwart that journals emerged as *the* medium of expression. Time was no longer experienced as the static, infinite return of a prefigured past/present, but as a series of dynamic, lived moments which broke fundamentally from the past and were building to an unknown future. Instead of the truths contained in books, truths presumed to be as atemporal and unchanging as the reality upon which they commented, journals could provide information which was "current," knowledge which could both comment on and change the present moment. The Gegenwart, as the collective interaction of all individual actors, could only be apprehended collectively, demanding not only that each journalist "von seinem Standorte aus rund um sich her zu blicken," but also that the greater population be conscripted to the project of understanding and reality creation. The next section will examine the fundamental epistemological openness of the journalistic medium, arguing that its form, a form which was designed to foster and nourish the half-thoughts of the individual in the care of a unified public, was itself the product of a collaborative interaction between the authors and editors of the journals and an unseen, non-identical Many.

VI. A question of Form: The Co-Authorship of the Many

In his letter to Campe expressing skepticism over the journalistic medium, "Ein Einwurf wider die Nützlichkeit periodischer Schriften," Christian Garve raises two primary critiques of periodical media. First, Garve questions the degree of collaboration among authors which actually occurs within the pages of journals, despite the "blendenden Schein" that bringing so many great names together may have:

> Aber sagen Sie mir, werden im Grunde die Gedanken derselben dadurch, daß sie in einem Bande zusammengedruckt sind, besser mit einander verbunden,

> zielen sie genauer zu einem gemeinschaftlichen Zwecke ab, als wenn jeder ein eignes Buch geschrieben hätte, in welchem eben dieser Gegenstand wäre behandelt worden? (“Einwurf” 16)

Garve’s question[57] is: does the act of publishing articles within the same physical pages of a single journal constitute real collaboration? “Was entsteht für Vortheil für das Publicum, wenn Gelehrte, die an Fähigkeiten, Denkungsart und Absicht einander gleich, immer als gemeinschaftliche und Verbundene Arbeit im Reiche der Wahrheit angesehen werden können, ihre Aufssätze neben einander drukken lassen?” (Einwurf 17). As Garve’s phrasing implies, he believes the “Gelehrte” authors of the journal articles are already unified, not only in the “Reiche der Wahrheit,” but more importantly, within the minds of the audience itself “diese Vereinigung der Arbeiten geschieht besser in den Köpfen und Gemüthern der Leser, als in den Büchern der Schriftsteller” (“Einwurf” 16). Garve’s theory of reading and language, along with the journalistic alternative it produces, will be explored at length below: what is of importance now is that not only does Garve contend that no real collaboration happens within the journalistic medium, he argues further that the journalistic form is actively harming the intellectual production of the authors who take part in it. Garve sees this as a necessary side-effect of human nature: humans are naturally motivated by “Ehrbegierde und durch die Begierde nach Vortheil” (“Einwurf” 16). These selfish motivations are best satisfied by individual publication, and not through becoming one of dozens of listed authors, or even worse, being published anonymously within a journal. The result of publishing in this manner is, “daß selbst die guten Köpfe, die sich zu solchen periodischen Schriften vereinigen, für

[57] Incidentally, a question which still plagues conference panels and academic journals to this day.

dieselben nur die flüchtiger gearbeiteten Aufsätze bestimmen, die vielleicht eben so gut dem Publico ganz entzogen werden konnten" ("Einwurf" 17-18). Not only does this negatively affect the quality of the articles published within the journal, Garve believes that the time commitments of producing for journals, combined with the kind of slovenly writing which journalism encourages, can prevent great writers from publishing works of lasting value. Throughout his critique, Garve remains characteristically deferential and open to rebuttal, and also recognizes that such collaborative writing is necessary "wenn das Publicum zu gewissen bestimmten Zeiten ununterbrochen mit Unterricht oder mit Unterhaltung versorgt werden soll;" nevertheless, Garve allows himself "einem Freunde meine Meinung über diese Puncte aufrichtig mitzutheilen," and brings this opinion sharply into focus one last time: "Je größer die Zahl der Mitarbeiter wird: desto unvollkommner, oder wenigstens desto ungewisser wird der Erfolg des Werks" (16, 19).

Campe's measured response begins by picking up on Garve's assertion that, for good or for ill, journalism has become *the* medium of the late 18th century, a time when "die Hauptlectüre des Publicums in Journalen Besteht, und wo der Strom der gemeinnützigsten Ideen und Belehrungen aus so vielen guten, zum Theil vortreflichen Köpfen, sich in das Bett der periodischen Schriften drängt," ("Beantwortung" 19). The very ubiquity of journals makes answering Garve's challenges all the more pressing; to do so, Campe turns to metaphor:

> Ich könnte Ihren Einwurfe zuvörderst und im Allgemeinen entgegensetzten, daß der moralische Arzt, wie der physische, wenn er es mit verzärtelten und eigensinnigen Kranken zu thun hat, sich in Ansehung des Vehikels seiner Heilmittel, der Wirksamkeit derselben und seiner eigenen Würde unbeschadet, gar wol nach dem Geschmacke oder den Launen seines Patienten bequemem

> dürfe, und in Fällen, wo sich nichts ertrotzen läßt, sich darnach bequemen müsse. Ich könnte hinzufügen, daß dem zufolge ein nach Gemeinnützigkeit strebender Schriftsteller, der mehr auf seine Zeitgenossen, deren wirkliche sittliche Bedürfnisse er kennt, als auf die Nachwelt, deren mögliche Bedürfnisse er nur vermuthen kann, zu wirken wünscht, keine von dem jedesmaligen herrschenden Geschmacke seines Publicums ihm vorgeschriebene Form und Einkleidungsart seinser moralischen Recepte verschmähen dürfe; und daß man daher, wenn dieses sein Publicum einmal auf die sonderbare Grille verfiele, nichts als Frachtzettel lesen zu wollen, es ihm zur Weisheit anrechen müßte, wenn er sich auch dazu bereitwillig finden ließe, ihm seinen Rath, seine Vorschläge und Belehrungen im Geleite Gottes durch Fuhrmann N.N. zu senden. Denn was ist Weisheit, wenn sie nicht wahl der besten und wirksamsten Mittel zu guten Zwecken ist? (“Beantwortung” 20-21)

I have reproduced this rather long passage in its entirety, because within it, Campe succinctly brings together temporality, writing form, the authorial/editorial desire for control, and, most importantly, the influence of audience demand. The temporality present here has already been quoted and discussed at length: journals are the medium of the Now, dealing with current, unique problems afflicting the modern audience. The positioning of journal authors as the “moralische Ärzte” of society is telling, but unsurprising, particularly in the context of a pedagogical publication: as previously mentioned, and as discussed in the first chapter, the latent violence of the Enlightenment has long been understood. The Enlightenment meant both freedom from serfdom as well as freedom from the means of production, freedom from corporal punishment as well as

the freedom to do violence to the self, freedom from myth and the unfreedom of the natural sciences and capitalism.

What is uniquely illuminated within this passage is the close linkage of writing form and audience, and the agency indicated. Again and again, it is the imagined audience, not the authors or editors of the journals, who dictate the form of the medium: it is the "Geschmack" the "sonderbare Grille" of the public "verzärtelten und eigensinnigen Kranken" whose will is demonstrated in the format peculiar to journals. The "doctor," by contrast may, or rather *must* accommodate "den Launen seines Patienten." Campe, echoing Garve, states that would-be authors currently find themselves in times in which the *audience* "durchaus monatlich unterhalten seyn will," times "wo man sich also gezwungen sieht, entweder mit dem Monden zu laufen oder sich ein Publicum in dem Monde zu suchen." For Campe, the question as to the absolute value of the periodical medium is moot: it is the form of writing the audience demands, and it is this form which "wol unmöglich ohne eine Zusammentreten mehrerer Schriftsteller ins Daseyn kommen oder sein Daseyn langen behaupten könne." Audience and form are inextricably linked, and it is the authors who must scramble together to meet their specific demands. Finally, there is no "vorgeschriebene Form und Einkleidungsart" dictated by this public of which the author-as-moral-doctor can be ashamed for "seiner moralischen Recepte."

What form did these "moralischen Recepte" take? And who is imagined to be the "eigensinnigen Kranken" who make up the audience receiving them? To turn first to the form of the writing (to the extent that talking about form is possible without discussing audience), it is useful to return to Campe's hypothetical of the "Frachtzettel:" should the audience demand "nichts als Frachtzettel lesen zu wollen," then according to Campe,

the author must accept as the only wise course “seine Vorschläge und Belehrungen im Geleite Gottes durch Fuhrmann N.N. zu senden.” The “Frachtzettel” as a form of writing must be read as a productive provocation on the part of Campe: where Garve had worried that even that writing form which already existed within scholarly journals of the Gelehrte was producing slovenly works which “vielleicht eben so gut dem Publico ganz entzogen werden konnten,” Campe claims by contrast that there should be no limits placed on the form of writing; as a hypothetical example, the “Frachtzettel” and its method of delivery, the fictional “Fuhrmann N.N.,” have been selected as the “lowest” form of writing imaginable in order to push this hypothesis to its logical extremes. It would initially appear that Campe is arguing that there exists no connection between the kind of knowledge conveyed and the form of its conveyance; that *Hamlet* could just as easily have adorned powerball tickets, or *A Room of One’s Own* could have been released in a series of Tweets, without fundamentally changing the nature of the works. This is not the case: Campe readily acknowledges that there are kinds of knowledge which do not lend themselves to the “Frachtzettel:”

> ...Werke des Geistes, welche eine genau bestimmte Einheit des Plans, Einheit der Manier und des Tons, feste Verbindung und wohl abgemessene Symmetrie zwischen den einzelnen Theilen erfordern, wie das z.B. bei jedem guten Gedichte, bei jedem drammatischen Stücke, bei jedem wissenschaftlichen Systeme und bei jeder als ein besonderes Ganze bearbeiteten Geschichte mehr oder weniger der Fall ist. (21-22)

Any work which requires a unity of “Plan,” “Manier” or “Ton,” any work which requires symmetry or a systematic linking of the small with the whole is necessarily excluded from the clutches of Fuhrmann N.N. Taken together, this means that all artistic and

scientific (in the sense of closed, internally coherent systems) are necessarily excluded from the pages of the Frachtzettel/Journal, or rather, if they do appear in limited form there, they cannot be the collective result of a collaboration between authors. Which begs the question: if the knowledge produced within “ein periodisches Werk vermischten Inhalts” is neither scientific nor artistic, is unified neither through schema, style or tone, what kind of knowledge is it? The positive description of the knowledge produced within monthly Enlightenment journals is the inverse: where a work of a genius is, by its very definition, singular in its origin, the knowledge of journals is collective and collaborative. Where the knowledge of the sciences and arts is internally consistent, symmetrical, homogenous and closed, the knowledge of journals is heterogenous, contentious, plastic and incomplete. Rather than the same information packaged differently, the journalistic knowledge of the late 18th century represents a fundamentally different ideal of knowledge production, one which owed its existence to the emergence of a non-identical Many and which disappeared as the radical heterogeneity of this group was reinscribed into new social classes.

When the editors of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* attempt to describe the kind of “Gegenstände” which their fledgling journal will contain, they describe a hybrid knowledge:

> Wir wollen... weder ganz ausgemachte Wahrheiten mit ihren bekannten Gründen von neuem vortragen, noch unsere eigenen Privatmeinungen, Vorstellungsarten und Ueberzeugungen geltend zu machen und zu verbreiten suchen; sondern wir wollen uns bemühen -- und wir bitten alle unsere Leser und Beurtheiler sich dieses wohl zu merken -- den öffentlichen Unterssuchungsgeist anzuregen und zu nähren, und ihn auf solche Gegenstände zu lenken, welche für die

> Menschheit vorzüglich wichtig sind, weil sie die fortschreitende Menschenbildung und Menschenbeglückung durch Erziehung und Aufklärung betreffen. (“Absicht” 6)

The editors seek something which lies between “ausgemachte Wahrheiten” and “Privatmeinungen” because “Wir wollen nicht dogmatisiren, sondern zu eigenen Untersuchungen reizen:” in this instance, the type of knowledge sought for the journal is framed strictly through its pedagogical function. “Dieser Vorsatz gründet sich auf die Ueberzeugung, daß es viel verdienstlicher sey, den Menschen Veranlassung und Anstoß zur eigenen Untersuchung und Prüfung zu gehen, als sie schlechthin zu belehren, auch wenn man der ausgemachten Wahrheiten noch so viel vor Andern zu besitzen wähnte.” This conviction is followed by the most likely already well-worn truism “so wie es uns auch in leiblichen Dingen viel wohlthätiger und nützlicher zu seyn scheint, dem Dürftigen Gelegenheit zum eigenen Erwerb zu verschaffen, als ihm das Geld mit vollen Händen baar und blank in den Schooß zu werfen, auch wenn man noch so vermögend wäre.” However, the claim that the choice of incomplete truths is *only* pedagogical is undermined even as it is written--the would be owner of “ausgemachten Wahrheiten” only *believes* (“wähnte”) to possess these solid truths to a greater degree than their peers, and even within the allegory, the beneficiary’s hypothetical ability to grant great riches directly is only given through the conditional “wäre.”

Another possibility for the openness of the ideas within the journal is presented on the next page, namely the editors are interested in collecting “in unserm Gesichtskreise liegende Angelegenheiten und Fragen, worüber die Stimmen der Untersucher und Forscher bis jetzt noch getheilt geblieben sind” (7). The “Gegenstände” of the journal are therefore to be specifically those objects for which no “ausgemachte

Wahrheiten" exist, and rather, these truths are to be generated in interaction between collaborating authors and with the public itself: "Wir laden daher alle… ihnen problematisch oder völlig ungegründetscheinende Ideen und Behauptungen zu finden meinen, hiermit ein, die Gründe ihrer entgegengesetzten Meinung dem Publico in diesem Journale vorzulegen." In the "Vorbericht" of the *Blätter Vermischten Inhalts*, established one year earlier, the editors similarly appeal to their audience for the submission of half-ideas of this sort:

> Wer auch nicht Zeit hat, uns völlig ausgearbeitete Aufsätze zu geben, wird uns doch durch Mittheilung zweckmäßiger Nachrichten, Vorschläge, Berichtigungen u.s.w. eine fast eben so wesentliche hülfe leisten. Auch ist es gewiß, daß aufmerksame Landwirthe und Hausväter oft Erfahrungen machen, deren Kenntniß auch andern nützlich seyn würde, die aber gewöhnlich mit ihnen wieder ausstirbt, so daß andere dies immer von neuem durch eigenen Schaden lernen müssen. ("Vorbericht" 4)

Here the lines between audience/authors, Gelehrten/Ungelehrten is muddied beyond recovery; the public as a whole is deputized as "Wahrheitsforscher" by the editors of the *Braunschweigisches Journal*. Here, once again, the multiperspectival make-up of the Gegenwart is laid bare--there is no way to gain an overview of the truth(s) of the present moment except through the aggregation of as much individual experience as possible. Stated more strongly, at the end of the 18th century, journal authors and editors believed the truth to be in its essence collective. It is within this context that the editors of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* note that it would be terrible to imagine "daß der Spielraum unsers Forschungstreibes von den knappen Grenzen unserer jedesmaligen ärmlichen Einsichten für immer eingeschlossen sey," suggesting instead that through collaborative,

collective effort it will be possible to achieve “neue Aussichten in das unermeßliche Reich der ewigen Tochter des göttlichen Verstandes, der allbeglückenden Wahrheit zu eröfnen!” (“Absicht” 9)

In his response to Garve, Campe once again picks up the thread of the “[nicht] ausgemachte Wahrheiten,” and attempts to speculate more specifically about their possible nature and origin:

> Wie manche interessante und gemeinnützige Idee, die in dem denkenden Kopfe oft beiläufig hervorspringt, und sich nicht grade an diejenige Gedankenreihe anschließt, die er eben jetzt im Begriff ist, zu irgend einem größern Werke zusammenzuketten, würde für die Wissenschaften, würde für den menschlichn Verstand vielleicht unwiederbringlich verloren gehn, wenn der denkende Kopf, bevor er sie mittheilte, erst jedesmal auf eine, vielleicht nimmer erscheinende Gelegenheit warten sollte, sie in eins oder das andere seiner größern Werke einzuschieben! (“Beantwortung” 33)

What this passage makes clear is the a-disciplinarity of the half-thought: they occur specifically outside the realm of not only the systemic, disciplined thoughts of the thinking individual, but also potentially beyond that individual’s own limited expertise:

> Man kann doch nicht aus jeder zufälligen Bemerkung, auf die man im Vorbeigehn stößt, nicht aus jeder wahrscheinlichen Vermuthung, die uns mitten unter andern, ganz heterogenen Beschäftigungen einfällt, nicht aus jeder kleinen Entdeckung, die uns vielleicht, ohne geflissentliches Suchen in einem Fache gelingt, welches nicht grade das unsrige ist, solgeich ein Buch machen und sie so in die Welt ausgehen lassen… (“Beantwortung” 33-34)

Time and again, the kind of half-thought Campe is describing is posited over and against the systemic, closed, disciplinary "größern Werke" which he argues the book as a medium is designed to contain. The thoughts which find a home in journals are "kleine Entdeckungen," "wahrscheinliche Vermuthungen," heterogeneous insights which reflect the heterogeneous lives of those who birth them. In other words, they are the "beiläufige Kinder des Geistes" which need to be given over to the "öffentlichen Pflege und weitern Ausbildung" of those who "vielleicht mehr Zeit und mehr Sorgfalt darauf verwenden können," and *not* lost in a "Leibnischen Schubladen," to be forgotten to the world, at best cobbled together posthumously, if at all. The pages of a journal such as the *Braunschweigisches Journal, Blätter Vermischten Inhalts, Berlinische Monatsschrift,* or the *Teutsche Merkur* are designed therefore not only as an open school for all those who write and read their pages, but also for the ideas contained on the pages themselves, ideas which first take their shape within an exchange between the many adoptive parents of the "beiläufige Kinder des Geistes." These journals were intended from the very outset as medium to be formed in the space between a collective of reader/authors, a medium which could exceed the possibilities of the book form: everything is "kürzer und gedrungener" than when an author feels "seine Materie zu einem ganzen Buche ausspinnen muß." The purpose of a journal, to bind "Unterhaltung und Belehrung, Vergnügen und Nutzen," allows for a medium with a "picantern Ton," and a greater plasticity, one which can reach deeply into the unknown recesses of "das Publicum" ("Beantwortung" 41).

VII. "Gutdenkende Leute aus allen Ständen:" Reaching for the Many

Of course, when it came time to discuss for whom, exactly, the editors of the *Braunschweigisches Journal* believed they were writing, and who, exactly, it was who could step in and foster the nascent ideas to be found within the journal, the editors remain elusive. As a specifically pedagogical journal, the editors write they are interested in all topics which could exist "in dem Geischtskreise des Schulmanns, des Erziehers, des Beförderers der öffentlichen Aufklärung," by which they mean ideas which are "gemeinnützig und nicht bloß für den Humanisten von Profession wichtig ist" ("Absicht" 13). This hazy listing of professions/descriptors paired with the negative description that they are not interested only in serving those who are "Humanisten von Profession," was typical for journals of this time. In the "Vorbericht" of the *Blätter vermischten Inhalts*, they begin by stating that "[d]iese Blätter sind zum Nutzen und Vergnügen zunächst für unsere Mitbürger aus allen Ständen und namentlich auch für den nachdenkenden Bürger und Landmann bestimmt," later asking "daß unsere Leser diese Schrift bloß als eine Zusammenkunft betrachten mögen, wo sich gutdenkende Leute aus allen Ständen, Prediger, Rechtsgelehrte, Cameralisten, Ärzte, Künstler, Hausleute, und wer sonst etwas gemeinnütziges weiß oder hören mag, mit einander über allerley Dinge freundschaftlich unterreden" (6). From this description, it is clear that the editors are trying to cast as wide a net of potential readers as they can--people, people from the country, city, any estate, from traditional literate professions down to "Hausleute" and in fact anyone who knows something or would simply like to learn something is welcome to join their "Zusammenkunft" ("Vorbericht" 3, 6). Others framed the influx of new potential participants less favorably: in Wieland's "Vorrede" to *Teutsche Merkur,* after having described its imagined role of delivering unbiased reviews of important new works, he notes "daß viele Leser sich selbst ein Gesetz sind, und keine fremde Leitung vonnöthen

haben”--unfortunately, this group makes up only “einen kleinen Theil des lesenden Publici,” a reading public which “täglich zahlreicher wird,” and of which “der größere Theil gerade derjenige ist, für den man am meisten besorgt seyn muß” (XX).

Campe grapples with the question of who might read a journal and why frequently in his response to Garve. Returning to the potential advantages of periodicals over and against books, Campe emphasizes the ability of journals to better circulate through a populace:

> [Denn erstens] sind sie ein wohlausgesonnenes und zweckmäßiges Mittel, nützliche Kenntnisse jeder Art aus den Köpfen und Schulen der Gelehrten durch alle Stände zu verbreiten. Sie die Münze, wo die harten Thaler und Goldstükke aus den Schatzkammern der Wissenschaften welche nie oder selten in die Hand der Armen kamen, zu Groschen und Dreiern geprägt werden, um als solche durchs ganze Land zu rouliren und zuletzt wol gar in den Hut des Bettlers zu fallen. (32)

Campe imagines a kind of trickle-down economics of ideas: in this telling, some “nützliche Kenntnisse jeder Art” begin their lives in the minds of the Gelehrte, too large and complex in their initial form for dissemination. It is only by breaking these ideas into smaller component pieces, that is to carry through the analogy, into short and accessible journal articles intended for a wide and not necessarily educated audience, that these ideas are able to circulate through the public--not only into the hands of “der Armen,” but into the beggar’s hat. This last metaphorical flourish is significant, as it represents most likely an indirect transference of knowledge: the smaller denominations come first to the relatively poor and only then through these poor to the utterly destitute. What Campe here imagines is most likely an accurate depiction of reading culture as it existed at the

end of the 18th century and described at the beginning of this chapter: by breaking great intellectual and social debates into the smaller, letter length (and many were indeed merely published letters, or written in the style of letters), they become transferable. Whereas it is doubtful that Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten* was read aloud in churches and town halls, the articles contained within *Braunschweigisches Journal,* or *Berlinische Monatsschrift* could have been, and so have reached not only the newly literate, but also through the culture of reading aloud, all of those adjacent to the newly literate.[58] In his article "Wider das Lateinschreiben: an den Herrn Direktor Gedike," published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in 1783, Johann Stuve likewise uses an economic metaphor to explain how the task of spreading the Enlightenment has expanded beyond the Gelehrten, in this case thanks to the majority of scholarly writing switching from Latin to the vernacular:

> Der Umlauf der Kenntnisse, der Entdekkung und Erfindungen in den Wissenschaften unter den Nationen ist nie so groß gewesen als izt, da die Schriftsteller mehr als jemals in ihrerer Muttersprache Schreiben… Nunmehr verbreiten sich Aufklärung und Wissenschaft unter alle Stände; die sogenannten Studirten sind nicht mehr die alleinigen Inhaber und Monopolisten derselben. Reisende, und Geschäftsleute aller Art verpflanzen und vertheilen sie in alle Länder und Welttheile. So wie der Handel und das Verkehr unter den Nationen

[58] This isn't to say that Kant was unconcerned with bringing his own ideas into circulation. First of all, Kant was a frequent contributor to journals, as evidenced by articles such as "Was ist Aufklärung?," published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. Furthermore, within this context, his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* can be viewed as his attempt at something like a more accessible, journalistic version of his ideas. Further, it could be argued that Kant even wrote his own "Frachtzettel" in the categorical imperative: the most simple distillation of his philosophy possible, something which he argues is understood even by those who have not even read it.

zunehmen, nimmt auch die Mittheilung der Kenntnisse und Wissenschaften zu, wozu die Gelehrten vom Handwerk nicht immer das meiste beitragen.

Both authors thereby shift a portion of the process of enlightenment beyond the Gelehrten, greatly expanding the population who is imagined taking part in both the transference, and in Stuve's example, the creation of knowledge. The linking of media, language and economy is likewise telling: the restructuring of society is occurring in tandem with changes in these three "currencies," and with these changes, the place of the individual within society is likewise shifting. Campe continues that while books may be convenient for the intellectually "wealthy," knowledge in this format does little to help the rest of society. In order to illustrate this point, Campe divides society into three classes of knowledge/wealth: the "Schatzmeister" and "Banquiers," that is, the Kants, Garves and Wielands of the world, those responsible for greatly increasing the wealth of the "Nationalbank" (32). Below them he introduces a middle class, to which he modestly includes himself, those who "oft nur ein Zweigroschenstück zu erwerben wissen, und gleichwol auch dieses Zweigroschenstück gar zu gern in die öffentlichen Fonds zum öffentlichen Nutzen legen mögten." At the very bottom of the economic pyramid of intellectual wealth he places "das Publicum," that is, "Kreti und Pleti, welche nichts erwerben, und doch auch leben wollen, und doch auch an dem Nationalreichthum des Geistes, wäre es auch nur zu Leibes Nahrung und Nothdurft, Antheil nehmen mögten." The interchange of ideas between these very different, but nevertheless now interconnected classes of people is precisely the kind of communication Campe believes the periodical journals can foster. The journals provide the "Scheidemünze" through which ideas "so durchs ganze Publicum in wohlthätigen Umlauf gebracht wird," penetrating down to even the most desperately needy.

Not content with leaving the poorest described merely as “Kreti und Pleti,” Campe attempts one last deep dive into the imagined recesses of the reading public. He does this by postulating two very different kinds of readers who would conceivably benefit from journal media. The first reader is the nightmare case of the would-be enlightener, the high-society boor. Campe paints a vivid picture of this “verfeinerten Lesewelt:” they are “unstäte, weichliche, jede Art von Anstrengung fliehende, nur nach Vergnügungen der Sinne und der Einbildungskraft rastlos haschende, an Leib und Seele verzärtelte Menschen” (36-37). Nevertheless, even these “gute Leute,”

> ...wollen denn doch auch einen gewissen Anstrich von Litteratur haben; wollen denn doch auch ein Wörtchen mitschwätzen, wenn in Gesellschaften von Litteratur geschwätz wird; wollen denn doch auch die langweiligen Zwischenräume zwischen ihren eigenlichen Berufsgeschäften--den Toilettenoperationen, den zu gebenden und anzunehmenden Besuchen, den Assembleen, den Spieltischen den Spectakeln und Prachtmahlzeiten,--mit irgend etwas ausfüllen, welches das… Spaßhaft genug ihren Geist zu nenne belieben, verhindern kann, sich in sich selbst, d.i. ins Vacuum zu versenken. (37)

These most aggravating of readers are not interested in the pursuit of truth. They have no desire to achieve any degree of personal perfection in the sense debated so energetically within the Gelehrten circles.[59] They are soft, vain creatures, fleeing from any sort of mental or physical challenge, interested only in the appearance of knowledge and culture. The image drawn here is unmistakably feminine, but the division between good and bad readers does not itself follow gender lines, as will become clear in the discussion of the ideal, non-gelehrten reader. Instead, a specific kind of femininity is

[59] Or as posited by Lenz, see Chapter 2: Synthesizing Free Will and Material Determinism

married to the activities of courtly life--a life full of meaningless social visits and hosted parties, gaming tables and empty spectacle. As the former tutor to Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt and one time Feldprediger to the crown prince's regiment while stationed in Potsdam, Campe was no stranger to courtly life, and it is this class/estate which is roundly condemned as a "Vacuum" of no value, one which constantly threatens to consume those who inhabit it. It is this audience which "uns fast kein anderes Mittel [als Journalen] mehr übrig läßt;" it is this audience which Campe has a hard time imagining "ein Buch von dem Umfange und von dem tiefgedachten ernsten Inhalte Ihres [Garves] Cicero's zur Hand zu nehmen, noch weniger ein solches Buch vom Anfange bis zu Ende nachdenkend durchzulesen" (36, 37).[60]

Campe, on the other hand, *can* imagine how such a person would come to pick up the latest issue of the *Braunschweigisches Journal*, a process he depicts in vivid detail:

> Da sehen Sie nun, wenn nicht grade ein neuer Roman oder etwas Aehnliches zur Hand liegt, begierig nach einem Büchlein mit gefärbtem Umschlage aus, weil sie zum voraus wissen oder ahnden, daß sie darin wenigstens etwas finden werden, welches ihrem gegenwärtigen, der Vernichtung nahen Zustande angemessen ist. Diese Etwas wird aufgesucht und verschlungen. Jetzt ist es hinunter; aber die lange schwerfällige Stunde ist noch nicht zur Hälfte vorbeigekrochen. Was ist zu thun? Man blättert das Büchlein noch einmal durch; stößt auf einen Aufssatz, der zwar ernsthaften und bloß belehrenden-Inhalts, aber doch auch so kurz ist, daß man das Bisschen Kraft, welches zu Durchlesen

[60] Garve's intent with his work on Cicero will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of the chapter, "The Journalistic Form seeps into Books."

> desselben erfordert wird, sich wol allenfalls noch zutrauen darf. Man wagt sich daran; und siehe! das Abentheuer wird glücklich bestanden; und siehe! es belieben wol gar ein Paar Ideen kleben, die auf eine odere die andere Weise, früh oder spät, zu Aufklärung und Veredelung auch dieser Seele ihre guten Dienste thun.

The lazy, spiritually decrepit individual, driven to the brink of the abyss by their own moral dissolution, reaches for the "Büchlein mit gefärbtem Umschlage," its very size and ornamentation telling them without words that it contains lighter diversions, not unlike those contained within the pages of the latest "Roman"--perhaps Campe imagines them flipping to the paragraph-length news items always printed at the end of the journal. These read, but with the experience of empty time still crushing down on them, they turn to a more serious essay, but one whose length communicates (again, non-verbally) its accessibility; perhaps in this inaugural edition they are interested to read a scant ten pages "Ueber die Glaubenspflicht," or maybe local interests prompt them to learn more "Ueber das große Waisenhaus in Braunschweig" over the course of 12 diminutive pages. In either case, it is the length of the article, the accessible style of the writing which enables even this person (a person Campe refers to as "ein Extrem," and one whose creation was the result of no little effort) to inadvertently take a small step towards enlightenment, leading to Campe's triumphant, rhapsodic repetition of "und siehe!" and the conclusion "Der Dank dafür gebührt dem Journalisten; ohne ihn, ohne sein Zumachen wissen… würden diese Ideen dieser Seele wol niemals zugespielt worden seyn. Und das Journalwesen sollte nicht zu den gemeinnützigen Erfindungen gehören?" (38). Imagination and reality bend together in the illustrated scene: there does not exist a shadow of a doubt in Campe's mind that scenes like this have and will play out countless

times across the German speaking world, and that the journalistic media is the *only* "Mittel" through which these ailing souls can be reached.

But again, this represents for Campe the absolute worst case scenario, those readers rendered the most inaccessible, not through personal hardship but rather through the specific constitution of their estate, a constitution which has made them infertile (but, importantly, not sterile) ground for enlightened thought. This prompts Campe to ask, "geschieht das am dürren Holze, was wirds am grünen Seyn?," that is, what does an ideal, non-Gelehrten reader look like?:

> Wie mancher schwerbelastete Hausvater, wie manche edle Hausmutter, welche ihre ganze Tageszeit der Erziehung ihrer Kinder und der Sorge für ihr Hauswesen widmet--also wie viel gute und achtungswürdige Menschen, die keine Zeit haben, größere Werke, die im Zusammenhange gelesen seyn wollen, für sich und ihren Geist zu nützen, finden etwan am Abend eines in rastloser Thätigkeit verlebten Tages in einem Journalaufsatze von etlichen Bogen Erholung, Vergnügen und Nutzen... (38, 39)

In contrast to the noble estate, whose empty hours creep by, the lives of these "achtungswürdige Menschen" are marked by relentless activity and work. Where the noble socialite reader requires short articles as a result of their own inability to sustain any form of physical or mental exertion, those same short articles are likewise a necessity for this "grünes Holz" because Campe imagines them lacking the time necessary to read works of greater length and complexity, or works which require that the reader have the necessary "Zusammenhang" in order to be understood. And who are these readers? They are once again the "Hausleute" obliquely referenced in the "Vorbericht" to the *Blätter vermischten Inhalts*: they are both the Hausväter *and* the

Hausmütter, people whose “ganze Tageszeit der Erziehung ihrer Kinder und der Sorge für ihr Hauswesen widmet.” Before exploring the implications of including women within the intended audience, it is worth applying the currency metaphor to this description of household reading practice: journals are intended *not only* for the rich philosophers and professional pedagogues, *not only* for those with a metaphorical “two cents” to contribute, that is, limited practical experience which may nevertheless provide new insights to the public as a whole, *not only* for “Kreti und Pleti,” who have nothing to contribute directly to the discourse but nevertheless wish to take part in only “zu Leibes Nahrung und Nothdurft,” *but also* “gar in den Hut des Bettlers zu fallen.” Read within this context, the “Hausvater und Hausmutter” are most likely only the second to last wrung within the economic pyramid of knowledge, those whose busy and productive lives preclude more active participation but who nevertheless hunger for spiritual sustenance, which they receive through the pages of the journal. To follow the metaphor to its conclusion, the beggars, then, are all those who benefit indirectly through the dissemination of knowledge via journals. Campe and the other editors and authors of periodicals like the *Braunschweigisches Journal* were not so deluded as to believe that their writing could be read by the entirety of the German speaking world. They knew the reading populace, though expanding, nevertheless accounted for only a miniscule fraction of the larger population. However, what the currency metaphor indicates is that they simultaneously understood that directly reading the pages of a journal article was perhaps the exceptional case and not the rule, and that the majority of their audience would experience their writing through other means, such as communal reading practices or other social interactions. To imagine with Campe: perhaps the Hausvater or Hausmutter reads articles of interest aloud to the household, a household which at this

time would have still contained a near-majority of non-biological family members, eating at the same table and sharing the common spaces of the home. Or perhaps it is hoped that these articles, now exchanged into more easily transferable denominations will exchanged in markets, churches and other public spaces across the nation.

To return to the explicit inclusion of women within the subset of ideal non-Gelehrten readers, York-Gothart Mix notes in “Medien für Frauen” that media of the Enlightenment made a more concerted effort than ever before (and more than would follow in the decades to come) to include women in both the readership and authorship of mass media. The genre of “Frauen Journale” began life in the early 18th century as moral journals produced by men for women, though often under female pseudonyms: a famous early example of this was Johann Christoph Gottsched’s *Die Vernünftigen Tadlerin*, which he wrote and produced in collaboration with his wife Adelgunde Victoria Gottsched. However, by the time of the 1788 publication of *Braunschweigisches Journal,* Charlotte Henzel had already established the first journal edited and written by women in the *Wochenblatt für’s schöne Geschlecht*, first published in 1779. Perhaps more notable is that fact that the early Enlightenment’s conception of gender was more radically egalitarian than either the late Enlightenment or the Classicism and Romanticism which would supplant it: when the Gottscheds established the *Tadlerin* in 1725, it was envisioned as a seed periodical, that is, the fictive creation of an educated society of enlightened women authors and editors which would hopefully inspire such organizations in the real world. This is because, as York-Gothart Mix puts it, it was believed at the time that “in allen Menschen diesselbe Weltvernunft wirksam sei;” the differentiation of the genders within the modern era was a gradual process and one only in the becoming in the 18th century. Of course, print media played no small role in this

process of differentiation--as Rothe argues in *Lesen und Zuschauen im 18. Jahrhundert,* one example of this shift occurred as the written word moved away from its epistolary roots, in which all individuals were potentially both author and audience, to the differentiated cult of genius, in which a chosen few (men) poured their inhuman gifts into works considered to be utterly unique and unrepeatable, works which were then read by a (feminized) audience which cultivated those reciprocal reading skills, such as empathy and sensitivity, necessary to enter into communication with the now-absent author.

By 1788, differentiation of this kind was well underway, but Enlightened journal media as a whole, and the *Braunschweigisches Journal* in particular, were philosophically and politically setting themselves against these divisions. Rather than segmenting and isolating portions of the populace based on gender or economic class, the ideal was to create a media, which, "durch öftere Abwechslung in Ton und Manieren, und durch eine große Mannigfaltigkeit und Verschiedenheit in Materien und Form" would be able to reach a "sehr vermischtes Publicum," and through this "Mittel," "gewisse unsern Zeitbedürfnissen entsprechende Ideen in sehr verschiedenen Köpfen aus sehr verschiedenen Ständen anzuregen und in Umlauf zu bringen" (23). The desire to control the populace through the means of journalistic media is, of course, unmistakable. Campe wishes desperately to warn in particular "diese schätzbare Classe von Menschen," that is, the hard working Hausväter und Mütter, of the dangers of the "Modekrankheiten des Geistes und des Herzens," to help them to understand the "Geist ihres Zeitalters mit seinen schönen und häßlichen Characterzügen" (37). Journals put the editor in a position to control the entire flow of information: where the selection of the individual books comprising an individual's knowledge base is left entirely to the reader, it is the editor of the journal who is responsible for selecting and arranging those articles

which will be published, an entire discourse which Campe argues the reader will feel compelled to read from start to finish if for no other reason than to get their money's worth: "was darin gegeben wird, das muß nun auch gelesen werden, wäre es auch nur aus dem haushälterischen Bewegungsgrunde, um für sein Geld genug zu haben" (41).

But to discuss journals exclusively as a means of control is to misrecognize the kind of influence exerted by the editors and authors. At best, this influence could be classified as what Caroline Levine would term a "canny" manipulation: editors like Campe recognize the given structures underpinning the current moment (that journals have become the dominant media form), could see the "affordances" of those structures, that is, the internal flexibility of these structures (journals can be sites of public discussion, are capable of fostering nascent ideas, express a new sense of temporality, as well as the possibility of reaching a greater and more diverse public) and anticipate the ways in which those affordances overlap with their own objectives (to "enlighten" the public, that is, to educate, but also to homogenize and control). But as has been shown, even Garve, used rather unfairly as the stand-in detractor of the journalistic form, recognizes that it is not the editors of the journals nor their authors which have chosen this medium as *the* medium of this time, but rather it has been summoned into existence by the demands of an unknown but ever growing Many. Concluding his discussion of the hypothetical ideal and worst-case readers, Campe tries (rather feebly) to shift the agency away from this Many, not to the journalists, but rather to the journalistic medium itself, by noting that all of the aforementioned edifying moments would have been unthinkable, "wenn die Zeitschriften nicht das Mittel gefunden hätten, sich überall beliebt zu machen, sich in alle nur einigermaaßen gebildete Stände einzuschleichen" (38). If this formulation sounds familiar, it is because it relies on something akin to divine providence to guide

the fate of humankind via the unlikely tool of the journalistic medium. Not unlike an "invisible hand" guiding through laws of economics, or an inherent "ungesellige Geselligkeit" pushing humanity down the path of progress through the cunning of nature, periodical media has insinuated itself into all walks of life and is slowly but surely working towards the betterment of humankind. However, even by shifting agency to the medium itself, Campe acknowledges the influence of the Many once again: the form of the journal is entirely determined by the "Verschiedene Köpfen" for whom it was intended. Form and public make up two sides of an indivisible whole, even or perhaps especially if the nature of this public remains unknown and unknowable. The internal gravity of the periodical media form experienced by all authors must be read as a co-authorship of the emergent, heterogeneous Many.

VIII. The Journalistic Form seeps into Books

It would be an injustice to let Christian Garve serve exclusively as the conservative anti-journalism voice, railing against the dangers of periodical media; not only did Garve help establish and serve as editor to the *Schlesische Provinzialblätter*, one the most successful journals established during this era, both in terms of longevity and circulation, Garve was a well-known and well-regarded journal author throughout his life, who contributed dozens of articles to publications including the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, *Aurora, Berlinische Monatsschrift, Blätter vermischten Inhalts, Deutsche Monatsschrift, Braunschweigisches Journal, Deutsches Museum, Der Philosoph für die Welt*, in addition to writing many essays for the *Schlesische Provinzialblätter* itself. Campe's frequent equation of Garve's productivity and influence to the likes of Kant and Wieland was meant as an expression of genuine admiration, a recognition of Garve's

centrality to many of the most influential intellectual exchanges within the German-speaking world--exchanges which took place almost exclusively within the pages of its many Enlightenment journals. It is therefore misleading to use Garve's "Ein Einwurf wider die Nützlichkeit periodischer Schriften," in order to position Garve as the voice of anti-journalistic sentiment; these scant pages are perhaps best read as Garve himself suggests, as the private/public expression of misgivings in a letter to a friend, from an author who had devoted and would continue to devote most of his production to the pages of journals. And yet, Garve's interest in, and concerns with, language and writing forms are too central and pervasive to his writing for this letter to be dismissed as an anomalous or a fleeting concern. In the essay "Ueber die Frage: warum stehen die Deutschen, nach dem Geständniß ihrer besten Schriftsteller, in Ansehung einer guten prosaischen Schreibart, gegen Griechen und Römer, vielleicht auch gegen Franzosen und Engländer, zurück? und welches ist der besten deutschen Prosaisten charakterisches Verdienst?," Garve attempts to answer the prize question issued by the Deutschen Gesellschaft in Mannheim. Garve has many reservations about the framing of the question. He argues that there are as many forms of writing as there are authors, and that this diversity is likewise reflected in the ideals to which these authors may aspire since there are "so viele Arten der Vollkommenheit" (62). Moreover, the possibility of a universal "Maßstab" is precluded by the "Verschiedenheit der Denkungs- und Empfindungsart der Leser;" as there exists no single ideal reader, there likewise can be no single ideal for the written form (63). Nevertheless, in order to address the question Garve guesses as to the metric intended by the judges, namely the "Ruhm [der Schriftsteller] und der Eindruck, den sie auf ihre Zeitgenossen und die Nachwelt gemacht haben" (64). Success is to be measured through a combination of fame and,

more importantly, the influence achieved by an author, influence which is understood both locally and internationally, as well as current and potential future impact. Already in the chosen measurement of success, parallels with Campe are visible: by linking the success of prose writing to the degree of influence achieved, Garve once again intrinsically links form with the demands of a diverse audience, a theoretical affinity which will be explored below.

Having selected a "Maßstab," Garve then assigns representatives of the best prose writing for each nation/time: Rousseau and Busson for France, Addison and Hume for England, Mendelssohn, Lessing and Engel for Germany, and Cicero for ancient Rome. While the majority of the essay is spent extolling the virtues of his fellow German authors, ultimately Garve agrees with the prompt: the prosaic productions of his country do seem to lag behind those of their contemporaries, particularly the scholarly productions of France as represented by Rousseau. The primary criticism leveled by Garve against all three of his friends and colleagues is the absence of any "größere Werke:" in lieu of coherent, fully fleshed out classics, he notes that his German contemporaries have instead primarily produced essays and fragments. Garve gives differing causes for this lack: in Lessing's case, Garve blames his combativeness, and an inability to gauge the significance of his objects of study, confusing personal interest with public importance. Echoing Campe's fears for the "Leibnizische Schublade," Garve asks rhetorically why so many of Engel's proposed works "als Fragmente in seinem Pulte untergehen," before answering that perhaps the outcome would have been different "wenn mehr Fleiß oder mehr Muth sich mit seinen übrigen Talenten vereinigt, oder Gesundheit und Glück sie mehr unterstützt hätten" (80). For Mendelssohn, Garve repeats the idea of the essay/fragment as the malformed result of the physical infirmity

or external adversity experienced by the author, speculating that it was a combination of "[Mendelssohns] Hang zur Speculation, seine Begierde alles zu ergründen und alle Ideen bis in ihre Elemente aufzulösen verbunden mit seiner Kränklichkeit und den äußern Umständen, in welchen er lebte…" which prevented the creation of "größere Werke" which would have created a more lasting impression on "den großen Haufen" (72). Garve was particularly sensitive to external influences, as his own career and writing had been largely shaped by illness: in 1772, he was forced to give up a recently appointed chair as Professor of math and logic in Leipzig due to health problems, returning to Breslau to live with his mother where he would remain until his early death in 1798 at the age of 46 (Altmayer 24)--indeed, even this essay on the prosaic form is itself part of this legacy, as it was only published posthumously in 1799 in the *Neuen Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste* as "Ein Fragment." In the letter "An den Herrn Consistorialrath Spalding" which serves as the introduction to one of his most important works, *Ueber Gesellschaft und Einsamkeit*, published in 1797 (the year before his death), Garve provides more insight into how his own illness had shaped his work against his will, noting that it had been produced "mit sehr ungleichen Kräften und bey sehr veränderlichem Zustande meiner Gesundheit" (VIII). Beyond the difficulty of sustained thought, Garve's physical weakness and failing vision necessitated that the work be dictated, a change in the writing process which had a cascade of effects on the resulting text. Garve, with typical curiosity and openness, noted that the dictation process had potentially produced a work which was perhaps "origineller" than it otherwise would have been, "weil der Geist, ganz concentrirt auf die Sachen, durch keine mechanische Nebenarbeit zerstreut [ist]" (VIII-IX). However, dictation also brought its own complications, from a text which was "weitschweifiger und weniger vollkommen,"

since it was no longer regulated by the author's eyes, to a writing style full of "mangelhaften Ausdrucke," a byproduct of Garve's professed unwillingness to inconvenience the transcriber by forcing them to wait for the perfect formulation.

It is therefore entirely possible to find further examples in Garve's writing which support the criticisms leveled against journalistic writing in "Einwurf:" that journalism's essayistic style is the slovenly product of insufficient "Fleiß" and "Muth," or more charitably, the unfinished form of a mind constrained by external adversity. Given Garve's lifelong illness, this could also potentially explain his own reliance on the medium. This assessment, however, does not survive any amount of scrutiny: as will be shown, Garve's essayistic, fragmentary and iterative style was the result of a philosophical choice towards a populistic, anti-systemic, a-disciplinary form of knowledge, one which he hoped could work towards the reconciliation of a population splintering under the centrifugal influence of the capitalist mode of production. At this point it is worth returning to the work on Cicero referenced by Campe. Campe uses this work paradigmatically to represent all "great works" of the kind which Garve advocates, believing it to be too great in "Umfang," too "tiefgedacht" for the non-academic reader "zur Hand zu nehmen, noch weniger ein solches Buch vom Anfange bis zu Ende nachdenkend durchzulesen." Nevertheless, Garve clearly intended it as a work with broad appeal, and furthermore, one which required no expertise. The exact composition of the "Cicero Book" itself requires explanation: much to Garve's surprise, a translation of Cicero's *On Duties* was commissioned from him by Friedrich II. The exact reasons for the commission were unknown to Garve, as several translations already existed, but Garve happily complied, producing not only a translation of Cicero's work, but also three companion books, one for each book of Cicero's *On Duties*. These companion books,

titled *Philosophische Anmerkungen und Abhandlungen zu Cicero's Büchern von den Pflichten* are remarkable on a number of levels; first, they absolutely dwarf the translated work, combining for a total of nearly 900 pages when compared with the 350 pages of the translation. More unusual still, the primary purpose of the essays is not to explicate the original text or to provide historical context, rather Garve describes the essays as:

> ...eine Reihe von Gedanken, die durch die Ideen des Cicero veranlasset worden sind: bald auf eine nähere, bald auf eine entferntere Weise mit ihnen verbunden, bald zur Erläuterung, bald zur Entwickelung bestimmt; zuweilen bloß an sie angeknüpft; ungleich an Methode und in der Ausführung, und nicht frey von Wiederholung. ("Vorrede" I)

Garve argues that by and large, no expertise is required to understand Cicero; that at times the reader will no doubt be curious as to a specific historical figure or location, but that the beauty and joy of Cicero is his approachability and comprehensibility. Garve continues that he has indeed written many such historical essays, which given enough public interest he would be happy to publish--but these first essays serve an entirely different purpose. They are an associative "Reihe von Gedanken" provoked by Cicero, an attempt to bring Cicero into a modern dialogue, a technique and form of writing which necessarily produces inconsistency in "Methode und in der Ausführung." But rather than excusing this apparent failing as the product of external extenuating circumstances, Garve explains what he believes to be the fundamental flaw of systematized knowledge, "Einige Abhandlungen zum ersten Buche sind systematischer, und vollständiger ausgearbeitet; aber sie haben vielleicht hin und wieder den Fehler der Systeme, daß in denselben mehr auf den Zusammenhang der Ideen unter sich, als auf ihr Verhältniß zu den Thatsachen, und zum Gebrauche gesehen wird" (I-II). While the essayistic, iterative

and fragmentary style of choice for *Philosophische Anmerkungen und Abhandlungen* suffers from an uneven tone, and repetitions, as a whole it avoids the failing of systematicity, the preferencing of the interconnection and neat ordering of ideas, of conceptual symmetry over an attention to the object of study. The essays of the second book epitomize this object-first mentality, and consequently are described as "bloß meine Empfindungen oder meine Erfahrungen… bloße Bruchstrücke, einzelne Gedanken, ohne Zusammenhang, oder doch nur unvollkommen verbunden" (II). It is impossible to read this description and not hear Campe's call to rescue the "beiläufige Kinder" of associative thinking from the "Leibnizische Schublade:" Garve has effectively created a journalistic book, one which empowers the reader to both read selectively and to foster nascent ideas, to bring their own experiences and perceptions to bear on material which is open and flexible.

Garve's gesture to empower the audience by making the release of his historical compendium to *On Duties* contingent on popular interest echoes Campe's "Plan" for the precursor to the *Braunschweigisches Journal,* the *Allgemeinen Revision des gesammten Schul- und Erziehungswesens: von einer Gesellschaft praktischer Erzieher*. In his proposal, Campe notes that publication is contingent "Unter der Voraussetzung, daß das Publikum dieses Unternehmen durch eine ansehnliche Zahl von Unterschriften unterstützen wird"--or in modern parlance, Campe invites (implores?) would be readers to "vote with their wallets," that is, to directly decide the fate of a future publication through Pränumeration ("Plan zu einer allgemeinen Revision" 170). *Allgemeinen Revision* is also significant in the context of Garve's essayistic writings because it is an example of the fluidity which existed between what are now thought of as distinct mediums: *Allgemeinen Revision* floated somewhere between encyclopedia, with

predetermined topics to be covered by specific people, and a limited-release journal running bi-monthly for ten issues. Further blending the predetermined top-down structure of books with journalistic practices, the announcement in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* solicits not only funding from would-be readers, but also new authors and topics of discussion, with the "Plan" intentionally leaving huge sections *unplanned*, in anticipation of a collaborative publishing process. Such announcements for forthcoming projects within the pages of existing publications were common practice, announcements which, when taken together with the repeated solicitations for contributions from the readership within the journals themselves, would seem to indicate an 18th century version of "crowdsourcing."[61]

Despite his purported longing for "great works," works of singular genius, unified in tone and content, Garve's unease with systematicity runs deeper than merely the fear that closed systems can lose connection with the subject matter. Claus Altmayer argues in *Aufklärung als Popularphilosophie. Bürgerliches Individuum und Öffentlichkeit bei Christian Garve* that the hidden motor propelling all of Garve's work was concern over the alienation inherent in the division of labor. Garve, as the translator of the definitive German edition of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and often indicated as one of the very earliest proto-sociologists, was acutely aware of the changes sweeping the relations of production and with them, society. He wrote innumerable essays on topics such as the circulation of currency, the abandonment of the German small town, the changing

[61] It bears mentioning, however, that through the conflation of the audience of the future publication with that of an existent journal, and further by blurring the lines between potential readers and contributors with this same audience, the actual reading/writing populace, that is the producers and consumers of journals, begins to look very much like the Gelehrte Republik which the Enlighteners hoped to replace, as already indicated by Fischer, Haefs and Mix's supposition of the high degree of overlap between the reading and writing populace

nature of farming, not to mention his previously cited swan song *Ueber Gesellschaft und Einsamkeit*, an extraordinarily ambitious work which attempts something akin to an ethnographic study of all the distinct populations comprising modern German society, from court society to hand workers and rural farmers. As Altmayer suggests, fears of the splintering of society permeated all of his works, including those dedicated to writing forms and education: in his 1779 essay "Betrachtung einiger Verschiedenheiten in den Werken der ältesten und neuern Schriftsteller, besonders der Dichter," Garve provides a concise description of what he views as the operative difference between economic classes and social estates:

> Das Verhältniß das der Befehlende gegen den Gehorchenden hat, kann er nur unter gewissen Umständen zeigen, und so lange, als die Art von Handlungen vorkommt, die er anzuordenen versteht. Hingegen der Unterschied, den der Reichthum macht, ist beständig und erstreckt sich auf alles. Wohnung, Hausgeräthe, Kleidung, Aufwand der Tafel, Kostbarkeit der Ergötzungen, alles was der Reiche hat und thut, ist anders als bey dem Armen. Der eine kann also seine Erhabenheit, und der andre seine Niedrigkeit niemals aus den Augen verlieren. (126)

This is the same qualitative difference that Polanyi, Sagarra and others were indicating in the first chapter: whereas the division of rank is performative, something which is marked with specific ceremonies performed at specific times, the difference of wealth penetrates through every facet of life, encompassing, "Wohnung, Hausgeräthe, Kleidung, Aufwand der Tafel, Kostbarkeit der Ergötzungen, alles was der Reiche hat und thut." This leads Garve to the conclusion that "Einen weit größern Unterschied unter den Menschen macht der Reichthum, als der Rang" (125). Garve (like Polanyi, Sagarra) is

not blind to the wild inequities of caste-based societies, but rather recognizes the radical restructuring society is undergoing, the "great transformation" in which profit becomes *the* organizing principle of society. Garve's claim that the division between entrepreneur/pauper is greater than that separating king/slave is a provocation, one intended to set in stark terms the degree of social disintegration he associated with this restructuring. Garve argues that the degree of social stratification in modern society is so severe, that despite increasing population and heterogeneity among the members of society, people interact almost exclusively with members of their own economic class due to the division of labor. For Garve this is deeply problematic on a number of levels, not least of which was that this division in living habits was causing parallel divisions within the language and customs of the different members of society:[62]

> ...durch die lange Absonderung [bildet sich] auch endlich ein Unterschied in dem, was man Anstand und Sitten nennt, in der Art, sich zu betragen und auszudrücken. So willkührlich auch diese Begriffe bald an die eine, bald an die entgegengesetzte Art etwas zu thun und zu sagen verknüpft werden, so sind sie doch das erste, wornach wir den Vorzug und die Verdienste des menschen messen; und dieß also setzt endlich die vorher schwankende und oft niedergerißne Gränze zwischen Leuten von Stande und gemeinen Leuten fest, und hebt alle Möglichkeit zur Wiedervereinigung auf. (127-128)

Prolonged social separation calcifies differences in custom and language, differences which are again performed in every moment of every day. And while these differences

[62] Additionally, Garve's theory of self and morality closely parallels that of Adam Smith's in *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, believing the origins of self and conscience to be found in the observation of those people around us, leading him to conclude that the greater number and variety of those interactions observed, the more robust the moral fortitude.

begin life as arbitrary signifiers, over time they develop into something more troubling, particularly at the level of language. Garve's theory of language held that there is an intrinsic link between language and thought, claiming "der Verstand [braucht] die Wörter... nicht bloß andern zu Sagen, was er denkt, sondern es sich auch erst selbst deutlich vorzustellen…. die Sprache [ist] nicht bloß das Werkzeug der Mittheilung, sondern auch der Bildung der Gedanken" (139). Idea and language, content and form are two sides of an indivisible whole, meaning that as the language of the different classes drift apart, so too do the very thoughts held by the different groups. What this means is where a Homer was acquainted with all facets of life and could write as knowledgeably about farming practice as he could describe current military techniques or bardic traditions, the modern author knows the language and objects of his own particular class: "Heute zu Tage ist der Dichter in allem, was zu den Arbeiten der niedern Klassen gehört, unwissend, und der Leser in Absicht derselben ekel. Der eine ist nicht im Stande, sie zu beschreiben, und der andere hat kein Interesse, sie kennen zu lernen" (173). The modern world is a place in which "das einzige Band der Gesellschaft," the transference of ideas, no longer exists "unter Gliedern einer Nation, die eine sich fremde Sprache reden, und von einander weder geliebt noch hochgeschätzt werden können" (128-129).

Altmeyer's book refers frequently to Garve's *hidden* emancipatory potential, positioning Garve as an unwilling radical, someone who was unable to follow his own theories to their logical conclusions. This reading is not without merit; for example, in the essay "Bruchstücke zu der Untersuchung über den Verfall der Kleinem Städte, dessen Ursachen, und die Mittel ihm abzuhelfen," Garve is sensitive to the economic causes at the root of the decline of the small city, tying it to the dynamics of ever increasing wealth

disparity. Among other causes, Garve points to the relatively diminished purchasing power of the poor, claiming that the plight of the nation's poor, property class has actually worsened in the past 100 years (411). He notes that those regions in which the difference between the rich and poor is the greatest are simultaneously the most economically depressed regions where only large cities continue to flourish. The solution, therefore, must be a redistribution of wealth and the creation of greater economic equality, one which will serve to bolster the financial situation of the nation as a whole (420). However, Garve, echoing Smith, does not believe that this redistribution can be the responsibility of the state, but instead must rather be the product of gradual (presumably "natural") change over time. Garve is vehemently against not only reappropriation and redistribution of the state, which he argues corrects one evil through the creation of the larger evil of undermining the new-found "sanctity" of private property, but also opposes progressive taxation, fearing that such policies could serve to de-motivate the beneficiaries, thereby foreshadowing conservative rhetoric for the next two centuries. In other words, Garve was not a Marx before Marx; Garve was not attempting to foment a material revolution against the new bourgeois order whose establishment he painted in striking detail.

And yet, the characterization of Garve as a reluctant-radical overlooks the major intervention he was trying to enact through his writing: the reunification of society through modifications in writing forms and public discourse. As Altmeyer notes, Garve proudly declared himself a "Populärphilosoph" at a time when it was already used as a pejorative, more or less synonymous with "Damenphilosoph," that is someone who only deals with superficial matters such as courtly decorum. Garve's anti-systemic, essayistic form, despite his own occasional protestations that it was merely the product of personal

deficits and adverse circumstances, was instead an intentional attempt at the creation of non-specialist knowledge at the very dawn of disciplinary division. Discipline is anathema to universal enlightenment: in order for a process of scientification, specialization and differentiation to occur, the fundamental precept of the universality of knowledge and the ultimate goal of unifying humanity in the realm of Truth must be abandoned. Garve, like Campe and other editors of Enlightenment journals, sought to break down the metaphorical walls which separated the greater populace from the knowledge of the Gelehrten, to counteract the growing animosity and class divides separating the population, chasing a utopia in which an enlightened humanity purses the Truth as a unified whole. Garve in one sense goes further than Campe, arguing that instead of viewing the burgeoning popularity of the novel form as a threat to general enlightenment, it is incumbent on the would-be enlightener to understand the reason for its popularity:

> Unsere Schauspiele, unsere Romanen, warum sind sie uns izt so reizend, oder vielmehr so nothwendig geworden? Zum Theil deswegen, weil sie uns in die menschliche Gesellschaft wieder versetzen, von der wir gewissermaßen ausgeschlossen sind; weil sie uns Menschen von allerley Ständen, und in weit wichtigern Auftritten ihres Lebens handelnd und redend zeigen, als wir selbst zu sehen Gelegenheit haben; weil sie uns wieder in die Häuser der Großen führen, zu denen wir keinen Zutritt mehr haben, und uns mit der Vorstellung schmeicheln, daß dort diese Großen uns ähnlicher und weniger über uns erhaben sind als sie zu seyn scheinen, wenn wir bloß die Mauern ihrer Paläste ansehen; weil sie uns in den niedrigsten Klassen, zu denen wir uns aus Vorurtheil und Stolz und angewöhntem Ekel nicht herablassen wollen, eben die

> Aeußerungen der Natur zeigen, die uns bey uns selbst gefallen. (“Betrachtung einiger Verschiedenheiten” 129-130)

Novels and plays in this sense represent a parallel project to that of Enlightenment journals, to provide a multi-perspectival account of the modern moment, to provide a space of mutual intelligibility and understanding. It is therefore not surprising that Garve lauds Rousseau’s creation of a hybrid, novelistic form for *Émile, ou De l’éducation*, or for praising what he describes as Rousseau’s ability to choose those objects which are of the greatest interest to the most people. Garve’s writing, like the journalistic form he criticized, sought to create a form which engages as large an audience as possible, one which demanded a more active participation than did novels or plays. Like Lenz (and, for that matter, Campe) Garve was deeply conflicted by the changes sweeping society, both welcoming the “progressive emancipation” capitalism and the greater freedom of expression it brought with it, while concerned over increasing inequity and societal fragmentation. And like Lenz, Garve created a writing form which remained “open,” in the sense that it was “unvollkommen,” comprised of “beiläufige Kinder,” fragments and ideas given over to public care, for others to complete as part of a collaborative process. Later critics such as Friedrich Schlegel and Friedrich Schleiermacher mocked Garve’s apparent mediocrity with glee, anointing him the chief representative of a “negative canon,” coining the term Garvinismus to describe anything which was little more than superficial or common sense. They mistook the iterative, experimental and experiential content of Garve’s work for the product of a lazy mind, one unable to penetrate into the true origin and essence of things. We must instead read the works of Garve, and the Enlightenment journals with which they were so closely associated, as the performative acts they were: as an (for a time, successful) attempt to create a place of conversation

between heterogeneous members of a fracturing society, to build a place of reconciliation through the collaborative creation of universalized, non-specialist knowledge.

Conclusion: The Revolutionary Resurgence of the Non-identical Many

The formal plasticity and openness pioneered by the likes of Christian Garve, Joachim Campe and Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz was not to last. Lenz was found dead on the streets of Moscow in 1792, but his work had been buried years earlier, as interest in Sturm und Drang waned and his mental health and relationship with Goethe and others deteriorated. After a life of infirmity, Garve died in 1798. Unlike Lenz, Garve enjoyed a brief spike in popularity after his death, with multiple collected works published, as well as a number of commemorations in journals in the years following his death. However this popularity, which built on the acclaim he had enjoyed in life, was short lived. As previously indicated, within only a few years of his death, Garve was used metonymically to disparage the entirety of the Enlightenment movement. Representatives of Romanticism, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Friedrich Schlegel, took particular delight in mocking Garve's work, with Schlegel ascribing Garve to the "negative classics," and even coining the term "Garvianismus" in *Zur Philologie I* as a means of describing work he deemed lazy and superficial, a "common sense" knowledge which lacked all scientific rigor or willingness to strive for origins. As a result, Garve would join Lenz in the ranks of the forgotten ten years after his death. Of course, not every would-be enlightener died so neatly within the confines of the 18th century: Campe, Nicolai, Wieland would live until 1818, 1811 and 1813 respectively. But the shape of society was continuing to change, and the role of journals within it. As Patrick Eiden-Offe argues in *Die Poesie der Klasse*, the first half of the 19th century prior to the 1848 revolutions can still be characterized as a moment *before* the emergence of class

consciousness, in which the working classes still represented, in the words of Marx, a “buntscheckiger Haufen” (Eiden-Offe 21). However, the complete anchorlessness and absolute irreducibility of the Many was already undergoing accelerating material changes in the first decades of the 19th century. More and more lives had long since been wrested from the amorphous, atemporal traditional world, converted into a fluid labor poor for the capitalist mode of production. The creeping social stratification characteristic of the division of labor was mirrored by a spreading disciplinarity of the sciences and the arts, a trend which would be characteristic for much of the 19th century. The rise of systematicity and radical specialization in the natural and social sciences finds its mirror in the shifting understanding of the Geistigkeit of the Romanticists, who position themselves as experts of the pure expression of the spirit. Both the sciences and the artistic production of the early 19th century can be seen as different aspects of the same phenomenon, as both are defined through that which they exclude, as the fundamental claim of specialization is that it describes work which is not achievable by the majority. To advocate for scientific rigor or true artistry is to deny the possibility of universal knowledge, and to reject those forms of knowledge which present themselves as open to general understanding and collaboration. The necessary precursor to the creation of consciousness along the lines of class is therefore the destruction of those forms of knowledge co-created with a Many which defied classification.

Strict social classificatory systems, however, remain imaginary conceptual frameworks, no matter how apparently solid or influential. In the wake of the first World War, the October Revolution, and the spread of Taylorism, the neat borders of the economic classes, carefully established over the course of the previous century, were eroded, with more and more of the population pushed into an amorphous mass.

Concurrent with this changing material reality, new mass-media forms, such as radio and film, emerge, while old forms, such as newspapers, plays and novels, are reimagined and gain new resonance. In “Autor als Produzent” Walter Benjamin describes Brecht’s Epic Theater in strikingly familiar tones:

> [Brecht] stellt dem dramatischen Gesamtkunstwerk das dramatische Laboratorium gegenüber… Im Mittelpunkt seiner Versuche steht der Mensch. Der heutige Mensch: ein reduzierter also, in einer kalten Umwelt kaltgestellter… Aus kleinsten Element der Verhaltungsweisen zu konstruieren, was in der aristotelischen Dramaturgie ‘handeln’ genannt wird, das ist der Sinn des epischen Theaters. (245)

Lenz’s “comedies” pull the every-day realities to the fore, organizing the play’s structure not around a free-acting hero, but rather around the social and material limitations which collectively form a new actor, Society, against which no individual actor can be described as free. Similarly, Brecht’s Epic theater focuses not on the heroes of classical epics, but on the “reduced” individual, an individual reduced through a cold, calculating reality. Benjamin further describes Brecht’s works as defined by the Montage, a technique borrowed from other mass phenomena of the time, naming film and photography. Just as Lenz “ruined” his lifelike depictions of people as they really are through seemingly erratic staging and a disregard for classical unities, Brecht’s plays famously operated through a dynamic of perpetual interruption, the denial of bourgeois conditioned response to enjoy or consume art. Instead of imagining creative production as part of the “superstructure” of society, Benjamin argues that writers such as Brecht were defining their position *within* the relations of production; instead of the product of a production process, the media form becomes a means of production, one which demands the

mutual labor of author, actor, audience, a collaborative effort at whose end new relations become imaginable.

Benjamin characterized this genre/media form bending as part of a larger "Umschmelzungsprozeß," one which was eroding not only medial and formal boundaries, but other long-standing divisions, including author/audience, individual/masses, human/non-human. In the possibility of eradicating the border between writer/reader, Benjamin acknowledges a debt to Sergei Tret'jakov, a soviet journalist, playwright and theorist whose writings served as a major source of inspiration to both Benjamin and Brecht. Because Tret'jakov believed that creative production must be viewed as "ein Produktionsprozeß unteranderen Zweigen der Produktion," he vehemently rejected the old, mystifying model of artistic reception, which made the artist a "Magier… Zauberer… begnadeten Seher und Propheten," a "Kaste von Spezialisten, die von irgendwoher, fast aus dem Überirdischen, in 'Anwandlungen von Inspiration' das heilige Feuer ausdrucksstarker Worte und Bilder, von Farb- und Klangkombinationen, herniederholt" ("Die Kunst in der Revolution" 10, 12). The production of this special, near-divine caste of geniuses necessarily simultaneously produces an audience which is "ein passives Publikum, Menschen, die einen großen Teil ihres Lebens für eine sinnlos eingesetzte, ungeliebte Arbeit hingeben" (10). Creative production understood through this bourgeois lens can only ever be the art of distraction, an opiate to deaden the masses, regardless of its potentially "revolutionary content." Tret′jakov asks how it is possible that the old paradigm of form/content has been universally rejected, while the dichotomy of author/audience is left untouched? How authors can imagine that substituting "partisan" for "flower" and "revolution" for "nature" represents a satisfactorily revolutionary art form? This kind of empty iconography merely introduces new works in

which “[die Menschen] sich… in Kontemplation [versenken]’, ‘erleben und leiden mit’, anstatt ein Gedicht als einen ersten Versuch der Organisation der lebendigen menschlichen Sprache, der Mitschaffen fordert, aufzunehmen; das Theater als ersten Weckruf zur Rhythmik des gemeinsamen Aufbaus des Lebens usw” (13).

In order to create this kind of interactive, “agitative” art form, a radical process of “Entindividualisierung und Entprofessionalisierung” of artistic production is necessary (“Fortsetzung Folgt” 75). By this Tret′jakov imagines a reciprocal process, one in which both authors recognize and take a more active role in the relations of production, but more importantly, where the expression of the great working-masses is facilitated. When confronted with the reality that all children sing, dance, seek the perfect word, Tret′jakov muses “Ist denn der Verlust des aktiven künstlerischen Instinkts des Menschen, der ihn aus einem aktiven Produzenten in einen Zuschauer und Konsumenten verwandelt, als normal anzusehen?” (“Die Kunst in der Revolution” 12). The answer is resolutely no: “Jeder Mensch kann und soll ausdrucksstark sprechen, sich bewegen, allen Dingen mit ausdrucksstarken Farben Schönheit verleihen, in jedes von ihm produzierte Ding jenes Maximum an Genauigkeit, klarer Kontur und Zweckmäßigkeit einbringen” (12). The only acceptable understanding of “Kunst für alle” is not that the whole world is converted into “Zuschauer,” that is, that the old bourgeois forms are merely made universally accessible, but rather that “Jeder soll ein Künstler sein, ein vollendeter Meister in der Sache, die er im gegebenen Moment tut” (13) Those tools which are currently the purview of a chosen few must be made the universal right of all people. This is how the “Entprofessionalisierung” necessarily entails an “Entindividualisierung” of art as well; to a certain extent, all that the “Entindividualiserung” requires is the recognition of the creative work already being done by “non-artists.” The reality of creative production is

that it never has been and never will be the product of a single “genius.” Tret′jakov illustrates this with the traditional novel:

> Wenn das “künstlerische” Buch gewöhnlich einen Namen auf seinem Umschlag, den Firmennamen seines ‘Schöpfers’ trägt, so ist das nur ein scheinbares Phänomen. Auch ein Buch stellt schon das Produkt vieler Hände dar, und nur auf Grund alter Gewohnheit verdrängt die Hand des Schriftsteller-Fürsten die übrigen… Als ob wir nicht wüßten, daß unsere ästhetischen Feudalherren, die bedeutendsten Schriftsteller, schon längst in Produktionsgenossenschaften arbeiten, indem sie ihre literarischen Sekretäre und Schüler einsetzen. (“Fortsetzung Folgt” 76)

Novels and other artistic works have hidden the collaborative reality of their creation behind the fiction of the author-as-brand, a fiction which directly masks the labor of dozens of workers, in addition to pretending ignorance to the discourses from which such works necessarily emerge.

By contrast, Benjamin and Tret′jakov argue that the salient media forms of the current moment, newspapers, films, journals, even textbooks and certain scientific works openly announce their collaborative, multiperspectival origins. Tret′jakov explains this as a fundamental “Interesse am Material… und zwar am Material in seiner rohesten Form: Memoiren, Chronik, Skizze, Artikel, Rechenschaftsbericht” (“Wir Schlagen Alarm!” 41). Benjamin argues that no form better reflects these “raw materials,” or demonstrates the dissolution of old dichotomies, than newspapers:

> Ihr Inhalt, ‘Stoff’, der jeder anderen Organisationsform sich versagt als der, die ihm die Ungeduld des Lesers aufzwingt. Und dies Ungeduld ist nicht allein die des Politikers, der eine Information, oder die des Spekulaten, der einen Tip

> erwartet, sondern dahinter schwelt diejenige des Ausgeschlossenen, der ein Recht zu haben glaubt, selber mit seinen eigenen Interessen zu Wort zu kommen. (“Autor als Produzent” 235)

The words of Campe, Nicolai, Biester and dozens of other journal editors of the late 18th century seem to echo across the century divide; it is an undefined “Ausgeschlossene” whose felt presence organizes the structure and content of the newspapers, a voiceless majority who finds expression in the very form of the medium. “Mit der wahllosen Assimilation von Fakten geht also Hand in Hand die gleich wahllose Assimilation von Lesern, die sich im Nu zu Mitarbeitern erhoben sehen”--Benjamin’s usage of “wahllos” here seems contradictory (after all “dahinter schwelt… [die] Ausgeschlossene), nevertheless it indicates an important turning point; while on the one hand, it is important to indicate that influence which the Many already have on creative production, as indicated by Brecht’s Epic theater, the larger goal must be to foster forms of expression which necessitate and expand participation. For Tret′jakov, the model for all new media must once again be the newspaper. While the “Künstköche” may “drehen die Nase weg vor solchen ‘niedrigen’ aktuellen ‘Zeitungsformen,’” preferring instead to nail “das lebendige Material in die Schablonen-Särge von Erzählungen und Romanzen,” the fact remains that (“Wir Schlagen Alarm” 41):

> [J]ene literarische Form, die mit dem Tempo des heutigen Tages mitziehen will, hat die Kräfte eines einzelnen längst überstiegen. Beispiel der Zeitung ist ein ganz erstaunliches literarisches, gerade für unsere Zeit spezifisches Faktum. Nur die kollektive Arbeit, verbunden mit innerer Spezialisierung, macht die Existenz der Zeitung möglich. (“Fortsetzung Folgt” 76)

Again, the points of resonance with 18th century discourse surrounding journals are remarkable: the same assertion that collective writing is the only means of capturing a reality which has grown too complicated for any one individual to express. The emphasis on the here and now, Jetztzeit, is once again central, but this is hardly surprising: as has been shown, the idea of the Present is in its essence collective experience. Simultaneity is the idea of shared temporal space, the same moment viewed from different perspectives by multiple individuals, and to claim that something is simultaneous with itself is to descend into abstraction ad infinitum.

The question then becomes, what new collective, multi-perspectival forms are possible, and who should write them? Benjamin suggests that fundamental to the techniques which emerge must once again be an “Umschmelzung” of different forms and genres, specifically: the frames of classical art forms must be shattered by text, the assumed unity of art interrupted, thereby pushing these works from their position of passive enjoyment into one of active engagement. Art must be editorialized, become a site of debate: just as Brecht famously used text within his plays to add layers of meta-commentary on top of the more traditional actions carried out through actions and dialogue, Benjamin notes how Hanns Eisler reintroduced words to symphonic music, undoing a practice which in part had its origins in bourgeois consumer society, and thereby transforming the passive experience of a concert into a political meeting. Conversely, his critique of the photography of Neue Sachlichkeit is that it does *not* fundamentally alter the relationship between text and image, and so instead of commenting meaningfully on the grim, material realities of modern life, the photos produced end up beautifying the objects it captured. Just as a poem does not become revolutionary merely by swapping naturalist/humanist themes for those of a class

struggle, photos taken in the classical mold of a still life merely create new objects of distraction and pleasure, commodities to be consumed in the leisure time of the well-to-do. As to who should create these works of art, Benjamin again points to the newspaper where the borders between audience and authors is infinitely more porous than in traditional forms of expression. Theoretically anyone could find their own words printed on its pages: in the form of a letter to the editor, as an expert of their field, no matter how limited or specialized, in a report from abroad, as an eyewitness to an event, etc.. The frequent solicitations of the 18th-century journals for unfinished, unpolished, firsthand reports from all members of society were being realized to an ever greater degree. "Damit ist der Unterschied zwischen Autor und Publikum im Begriff, ihren grundsätzlichen Charakter zu verlieren... Der Lesende ist jederzeit bereit, ein Schreibender zu Werden. Als Sachverständiger.... gewinnt er einen Zugang zur Autorschaft" ("Das Kunstwerk" 33). The very process of extreme specialization and isolation created by the division of labor has inadvertently produced its opposite, providing each member of society a unique voice, highlighting the way in which each individual is an expert of their own particular experience. Additionally, Benjamin argues that the mere possibility of expression was having significant knock-on effects: readers, feeling individually addressed by the newspaper, take a more active stance to the read material, with everyone feeling like a "half-specialist," able to weigh in on those aspects which are beyond their immediate life experience: to argue the finer aspects of foreign policy, labor disputes, or even just the favorite of a sporting event.

Tret′jakov describes what the dissolution of the boundaries between writer and reader would necessarily entail in even greater detail. He sees this as a reciprocal process: on the one hand, the traditional author caste must make themselves experts of

their own locality, and the material reality of their neighbors. This requires that each individual author must fully immerse themself into the production process, not as a spectator or tourist, but working side by side with those she or he would describe. Tret′jakov modeled this in his own life, and his most famous works, such as the play *Brülle, China!* and the novel, *Feld-Herrn* were the result of living and working over the course of years in Beijing and the farming communes of the Soviet Union respectively. The genres created by Tret′jakov, such as the bio-interview and the biography of things, actively resisted common literary tropes, characters and narrative arcs by foregrounding material specificity. Tret′jakov is infuriated by the use of the material world as "setting:" "Ich habe einen idealen Fabel-Spezialisten beobachtet. Er braute eine Fabel zusammen mit einem Bettler und einem stolzen Mädchen, sog sich eine Intrige aus den Fingern und danach begann er sich für den Ort und die Epoche der Handlung zu interessiere" ("Das Produktionsszenarium" 53). Because the traditional narrative form focuses on the actions of a protagonist, irrespective of historical and material circumstances, the material world is necessarily reduced to backdrop, and at most the buffalo are exchanged for camels or donkeys by turn in order to provide "Lokalkolorit." By focusing on the actions of the protagonist (actions carried out almost exclusively in their free time, as Tret′jakov notes), the material world is flattened and all of the other individuals integral to constituting that material world are likewise reduced to a "Häufchen von gesichtslosen Kupfermünzen der verschiedenen Gruppen der Bevölkerung…" ("Die Biographie des Dings" 81). By contrast, Beijing in *Brülle, China!* is not used as an abstract site of a universal struggle of mankind against the powers of oppression, but a culturally and historically specific location presenting unique challenges and hardships. When confronted with the criticism that his play is nothing more than a jumble of

“Zeitungsartikel,” Tretʹjakov responds “Die Feinde haben das Wesen meines Dramas also ganz richtig erkannt,” “Die Zeitung lehrte mich, Tatsachen zu schätzen und sie für die literarische Produktion auszunützen” (“Autobiographie” 56). The communal farm featured in *Feld-Herrn* is likewise the organizing principle of the book; its structure as a “bio-interview,” is a mixture of autobiographical writing, interviews and reportage, providing a multiperspectival account, one which does not seek to reflect reality, but rather to show it in process and to actively intercede in the relations of production. Tretʹjakov further suggested an additional form of writing, the “Biographie des Dings.” As the name suggests, rather than focus on a place or an occupation, the biography of the thing, which would perhaps better be translated as the “biography of the product,” “stellt gleichsam ein Fleißband dar, auf dem sich der Rohstoff fortbewegt, der durch die Anstrengungen der Menschen in ein nützliches Produkt verwandelt wird” (“Die Biographie des Dings” 84). By focusing on the manufacturing process of a single product instead of the actions of a single individual, people in numbers come into focus, can be followed for a length of time, as well as people from “both sides of the conveyor belt,” that is both workers and capitalists. Tretʹjakov sees the biography of things as a necessary “cold shower” for the author, one which forces a shift of perspective and breaks the grip of old literary techniques.

Tretʹjakov, however, was not convinced that the traditional author caste would be willing or able to exert the great effort necessary to fight against the influence of canonical writing styles. More importantly, while forms such as the biography of things, the bio-interview and the play-as-newspaper respond to and integrate more perspectives and, through quotation, more voices to artistic genres, the fundamental structure remains undemocratic. For this reason, Tretʹjakov (and Benjamin) held the far more important

goal of masses-oriented media to be the integration of those masses into the production process itself. Tret′jakov expresses this as a lack: in a clear inversion of the conservative tutting over the glut of book production frequent in both the 18th and 20th century, Tret′jakov writes:

> Uns fehlen allzu viele Bücher… Die am Aufbau teilnehmenden Menschen sammeln eine kolossale Erfahrung an, aber diese Erfahrung liegt bestenfalls in Form von Dienstberichten bei den Behörden… Nicht beschrieben sind unsere Betriebe, die Häuser der Kinder, die Sowchosen, die Sanatorien, die Kolchosen, die Hirschzucht und die Traktoren Fabriken. Uns fehlen Lehrbücher und populärwissenschaftliche Bücher, Merk- und Nachschlagebücher, Faktensammlungen, die zur Auseinandersetzung anregen, und Montagen, die uns die verschiedenen Prozesse, angefangen von den nervlichen bis zu den geologischen, erklären. (“Fortsetzung Folgt” 77)

The change must be formal but also structural, requiring a complete reimagining of the publishing process, central to which reimagining must be a new kind of author, the Faktograph: “an Stelle der professionellen Schriftsteller, Menschen, die das neue, sozial bedeutende spezifische Material beherrschen” (78). On the one hand, Tret′jakov argues that the legions of Faktographs are already there, waiting to be unleashed: “Die Masse der Amateurfotografen, die Tausenden von Reportern und Arbeiterkorrespondenten sind bei aller Ungebildetheit und Unqualifiziertheit potentielle Faktographen” (79). At the same time, Tret′jakov, like the Enlighteners before him, insists on the need to educate these masses, to give them not only the language and skills necessary to express their reality (“die Fähigkeit zu schreiben muß zu einer so grundlegenden kulturellen Eigenschaft werden wie die Fähigkeit zu lesen”), but to inform their revolutionary

impulses, to help them understand that “es [kann] keine Fakten als Solche geben. Es gibt das Faktum mit Effekt und das Faktum als Defekt. Das Faktum, das unsere sozialistischen Positionen stärkt, und das Faktum, das sie Schwächt.” The works of the Faktographen are therefore not to be understood as a naturalist montage, a mimicry of the world as it is, but again always as an explicit critique, and as such, a critique which must in part be learned. Tret′jakov introduces further elements of control in the suggested structure of reformed publishing: while unquestionably more egalitarian, he nevertheless suggests a three-tiered division of labor within the Produktionsgenossenschaft, namely; Sammeln, to be carried out by the non-expert Faktographen, Bearbeiten, the work of trained writers, and finally a process of Überprüfen by trained field specialists. So while the hopes for the many in the 18th century were tinged with a fear of their transformation into a revolutionary horde, in the 20th century the revolutionary hopes for the masses were held in balance against the fears of a descent into fascist brutality.

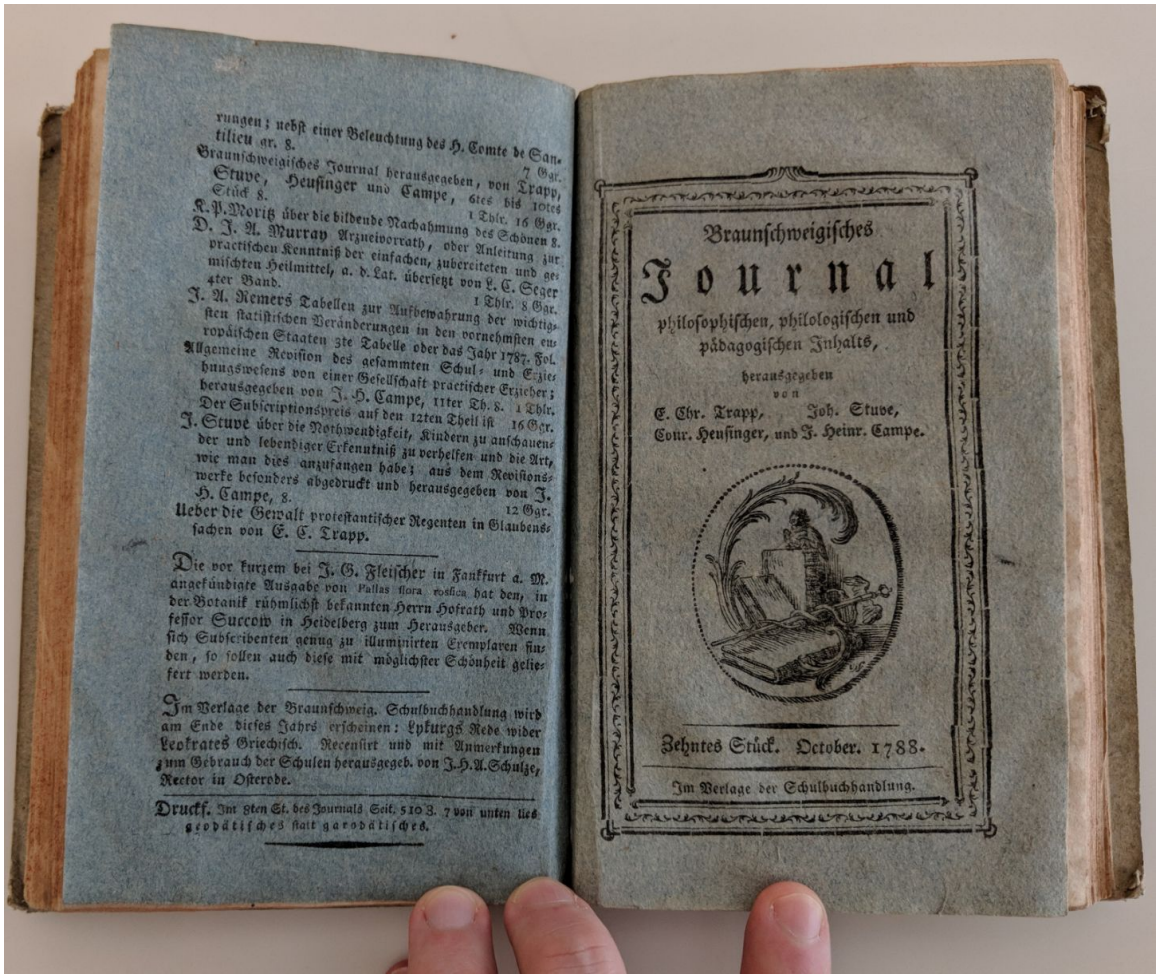
In examining the early 20th century as a new instance of the influence of “Ausgeschlossene” masses, a non-identical Many, on media forms, it is important not to overstate the parallels with the late 18th century. The tendency towards collective media forms such as newspapers and journal, the penetration of fractured, multiperspectival accounts, the focus on the here and now, the local all indicate major points of resonance between the two historical moments, and the comparison can be illuminating to an extent. However, it is important to recognize those elements which have changed substantially in the intervening century, most notably the perception of the Many itself. The idea of the individual itself begins to lose integrity in the 20th century: not only were the borders between genres, forms, and author/audience weakening, the divisions

between individual/many, as well as non-human/human begin to erode. This erosion is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in Siegfried Kracauer's "Ornament der Masse," which shows the centrifugal force Taylorism, science, capitalism and mass-media have had on the imagined sanctity of the biological form: from the overhead camera, dancers are reduced to kaleidoscopic flashes of legs and arms, the factory worker to the hand which pulls the lever and the eyes which survey the rolling conveyor belt, the biological specimen disappears into a borderless mass of organs, cells, and symbiotic interspecies relationships at the microscopic level. For Kracauer the dissolution of the discrete individual is emancipatory in the first instance, it is the explosion of the prison of the biological form, the overcoming of the last deterministic fate set against the liberation of human agentic potential. Similarly, Tret′jakov's biography of things aimed to decenter the human, to deflate their cosmic importance, in order to resituate people into their actual worlds, to gain sensitivity to the real limitations imposed on them and overcome those hindrances. What is the physical cost of labor? What are the real maladies of the modern world? How is human life shaped by its material conditions? These questions only become answerable when the agency of the material world is recognized.

The passivity of the invisible hands of the Enlightenment have also been replaced with the revolutionary potential of the masses. Lenz, Garve and Campe all sought to activate and engage a vaguely characterized audience/public: to bring them into the writing process, to tear down the social barriers to knowledge and personal betterment. However, the liberation was to be contained to a certain extent by the media created by these authors, as well as occur within the prescribed limits of current state structures. By contrast, the masses-theorists and authors of the 20th century sought to unleash the potential of masses, to enable them to create a new world order which

exceeded their own forms and concepts. As previously mentioned, currents of fear still existed, and with them the desire for a degree of control, the ability to guide the Many; the threat of fascism, of the Many led astray, was ever present. Nevertheless, there still existed a faith that given tools of expression and the social freedom in which to use them, the “Ausgeschlossene” multitudes would create unimaginable new forms of media and social order. The imagined shape of these new forms as well as the precise relationship of the non-identical Many remains to be discovered, work which would necessitate the analysis of works already mentioned, such as Sergei Tret′jakov’s bio-interviews, biography of things and agitory plays, the epic plays and theoretical writings of Bertolt Brecht and Siegfried Kracauer’s journalistic novels, but also the mass plays of Ernst Toller, the political works and speeches of Rosa Luxemburg and the early novels and autobiographical works of Anna Seghers. It is hoped that through the continued exploration of the influence of a non-identical Many on writing forms new insights into the emergence of social-media of the current moment can be gained.

Figures



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Ueber die Gewalt protestantischer Regenten in Glaubenssachen von E. C. Trapp.

Die vor kurzem bei J. G. Fleischer in Faukfurt a. M. angekündigte Ausgabe von Pallas flora rossica hat den, in der Botanik rühmlichst bekannten Herrn Hofrath und Professor Succow in Heidelberg zum Herausgeber. Wenn sich Subscribenten genug zu illuminirten Exemplaren finden, so sollen auch diese mit möglichster Schönheit geliefert werden.

Im Verlage der Braunschweig. Schulbuchhandlung wird am Ende dieses Jahrs erscheinen: Lykurgs Rede wider Leokrates Griechisch. Recensirt und mit Anmerkungen zum Gebrauch der Schulen herausgegeb. von J. H. A. Schulze, Rector in Osterode.

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Braunschweigisches

Journal

philosophischen, philologischen und pädagogischen Inhalts,

herausgegeben von

E. Chr. Trapp, Joh. Stuve, Conr. Heusinger, und J. Heinr. Campe.

Zehntes Stück. October. 1788.

Im Verlage der Schulbuchhandlung.

Figure 1: On the right, the front cover of the *Braunschweigisches Journal*, October 1788, on the left the back cover of the September issue. The covers of the individual issues were made of card stock only moderately thicker than the pages contained within, perhaps most similar to construction paper in terms of stiffness and thickness. Other features of the cover: “Ranken” of ivy mark the border, an image containing the caduceus, quills, books and other generic symbols of learning, the title of the journal, the four editors, number in the series, date, and the publisher, in this case the

Schulbuchhandlung Verlag, a Braunschweig-based publisher established by Joachim Campe in 1787.

Figure 2: Benjamin Franklin, *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, December 1783.

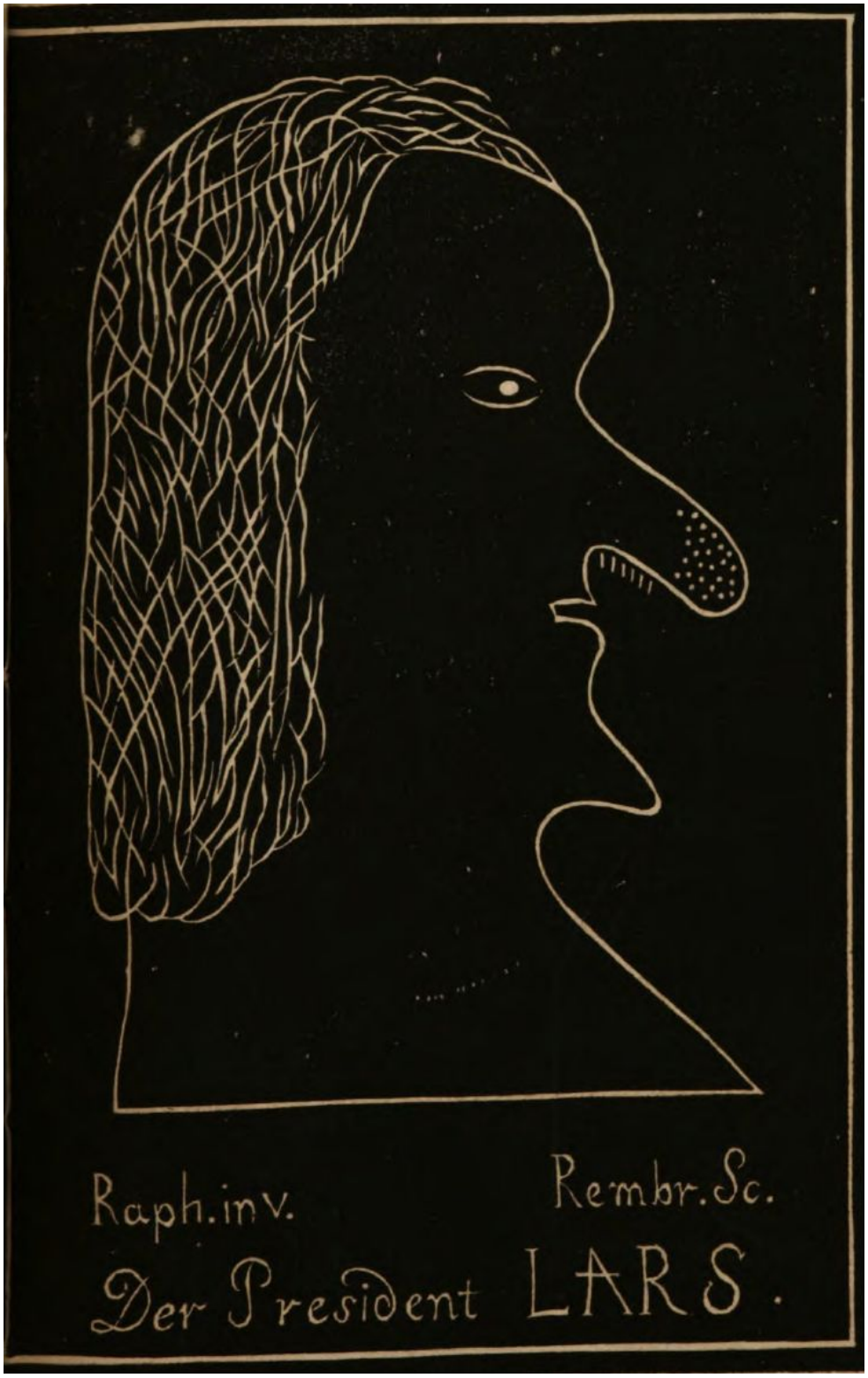
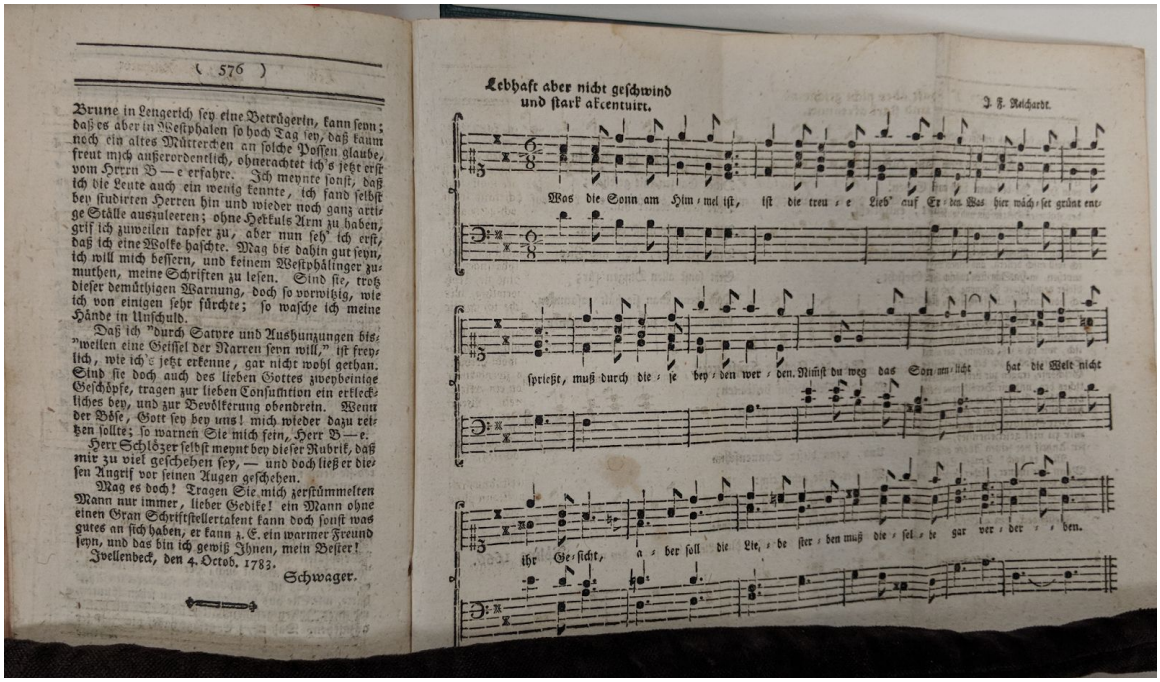


Figure 3: “Lars Hochedeln,” *Asmus omnia sua Secum portans*, 1774.

Figure 4: Diagram of glass harmonica, *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, June 1787.



(576)

Brune in Lengerich sey eine Betrügerin, kann seyn; daß es aber in Westphalen so hoch Tag sey, daß kaum noch ein altes Mütterchen an solche Possen glaube, freut mich außerordentlich, ohnerachtet ich's jetzt erst vom Herrn B—e erfahre. Ich meynte sonst, daß ich die Leute auch ein wenig kennte, ich fand selbst bey studirten Herren hin und wieder noch ganz artige Ställe auszuleeren; ohne Herkuls Arm zu haben, griff ich zuweilen tapfer zu, aber nun seh' ich erst, daß ich eine Wolke haschte. Mag bis dahin gut seyn, ich will mich bessern, und keinem Westphälinger zumuthen, meine Schriften zu lesen. Sind sie, trotz dieser demüthigen Warnung, doch so vorwitzig, wie ich von einigen sehr fürchte; so wasche ich meine Hände in Unschuld.

Daß ich "durch Satyre und Austunzungen bis"weilen eine Geissel der Narren seyn will," ist freylich, wie ich's jetzt erkenne, gar nicht wohl gethan. Sind sie doch auch des lieben Gottes zweybeinige Geschöpfe, tragen zur lieben Consumtion ein erkleckliches bey, und zur Bevölkerung obendrein. Wenn der Böse, Gott sey bey uns! mich wieder dazu reitzen sollte; so warnen Sie mich fein, Herr B—e.

Herr Schlözer selbst meynt bey dieser Rubrik, daß mir zu viel geschehen sey, — und doch ließ er diesen Angrif vor seinen Augen geschehen.

Mag es doch! Tragen Sie mich zerstümmelten Mann nur immer, lieber Gedike! ein Mann ohne einen Gran Schriftstellertalent kann doch sonst was gutes an sich haben, er kann z. E. ein warmer Freund seyn, und das bin ich gewiß Ihnen, mein Bester!

Ivellenbeck, den 4. Octob. 1783.

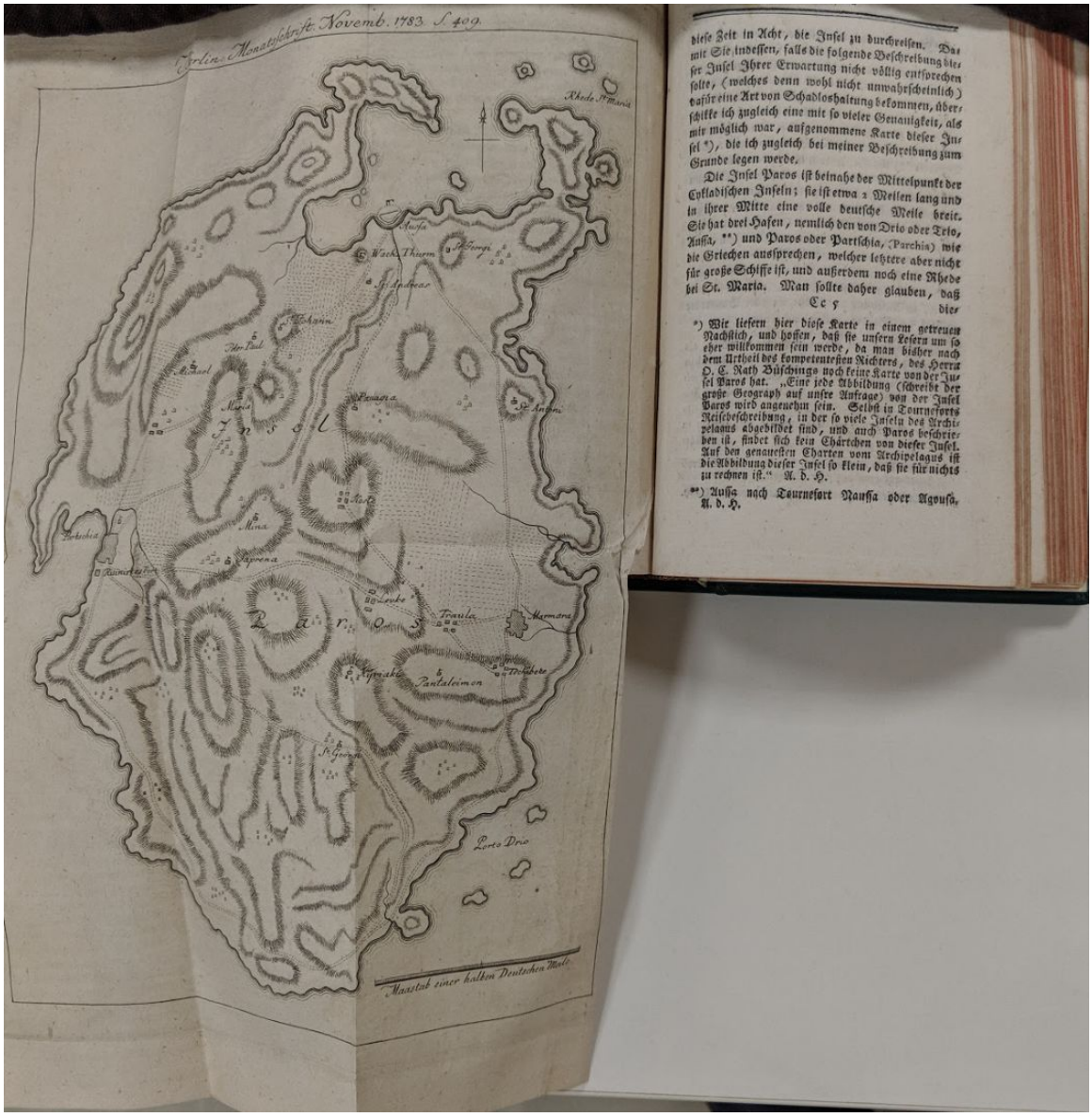
Schwager.

Lebhaft aber nicht geschwind und stark akcentuirt.

J. F. Reichardt.

Was die Sonn am Him / mel ist, ist die treu / e Lieb' auf Er / den. Was hier wächst grünt ent / sprießt, muß durch die / se bey / den wer / den. Nimmst du weg das Son / nen / licht hat die Welt nicht ihr Ge / sicht, a / ber soll die Lie / be / ster / den muß die / sel / e gar ver / der / / ben.

Figure 5: Untitled song by Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, December 1783.



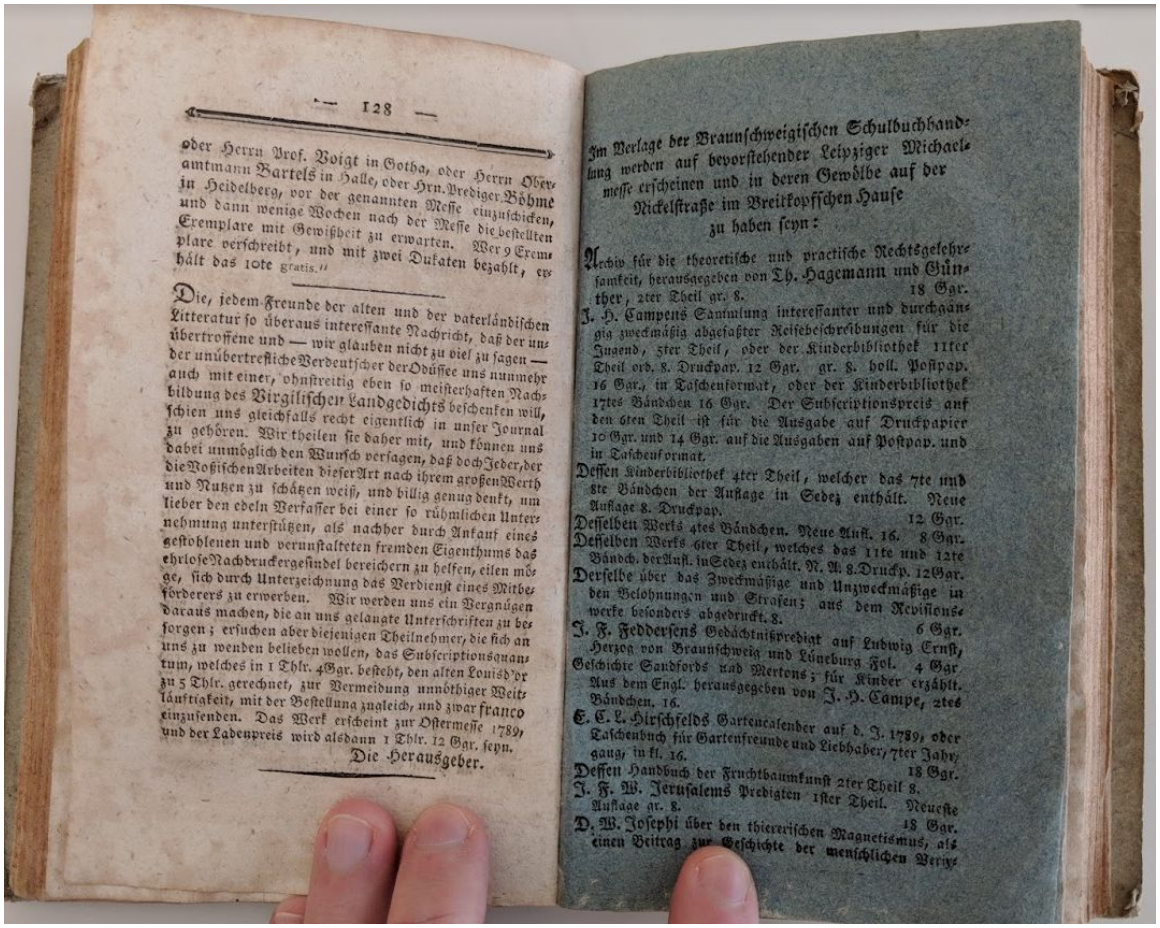
diese Zeit in Acht, die Insel zu durchreisen. Damit Sie indessen, falls die folgende Beschreibung dieser Insel Ihrer Erwartung nicht völlig entsprechen solte, (welches denn wohl nicht unwahrscheinlich) dafür eine Art von Schadloshaltung bekommen, überschikke ich zugleich eine mit so vieler Genauigkeit, als mir möglich war, aufgenommene Karte dieser Insel *), die ich zugleich bei meiner Beschreibung zum Grunde legen werde.

Die Insel Paros ist beinahe der Mittelpunkt der Cykladischen Inseln; sie ist etwa 2 Meilen lang und in ihrer Mitte eine volle deutsche Meile breit. Sie hat drei Hafen, nemlich den von Drio oder Trio, Aussa, **) und Paros oder Partschia, (Parchia) wie die Griechen aussprechen, welcher letztere aber nicht für große Schiffe ist, und außerdem noch eine Rhede bei St. Maria. Man sollte daher glauben, daß

Cc 5 dies-

*) Wir liefern hier diese Karte in einem getreuen Nachstich, und hoffen, daß sie unsern Lesern um so eher willkommen sein werde, da man bisher nach dem Urtheil des kompetentesten Richters, des Herrn O. C. Rath Büschings noch keine Karte von der Insel Paros hat. „Eine jede Abbildung (schreibt der große Geograph auf unsre Anfrage) von der Insel Paros wird angenehm sein. Selbst in Tournefforts Reisebeschreibung, in der so viele Inseln des Archipelagus abgebildet sind, und auch Paros beschrieben ist, findet sich kein Chärtchen von dieser Insel. Auf den genauesten Charten vom Archipelagus ist die Abbildung dieser Insel so klein, daß sie für nichts zu rechnen ist." A. d. H.

**) Aussa nach Tournefort Naussa oder Agoussa. A. d. H.



— 128 —

oder Herrn Prof. Voigt in Gotha, oder Herrn Oberamtmann Bartels in Halle, oder Hrn. Prediger Böhme in Heidelberg, vor der genannten Messe einzuschicken, und dann wenige Wochen nach der Messe die bestellten Exemplare mit Gewißheit zu erwarten. Wer 9 Exemplare verschreibt, und mit zwei Dukaten bezahlt, erhält das 10te gratis.“

Die, jedem Freunde der alten und der vaterländischen Litteratur so überaus interessante Nachricht, daß der unübertroffene und — wir glauben nicht zu viel zu sagen — der unübertreffliche Verdeutscher der Odüssee uns nunmehr auch mit einer, ohnstreitig eben so meisterhaften Nachbildung des Virgilischen Landgedichts beschenken will, schien uns gleichfalls recht eigentlich in unser Journal zu gehören. Wir theilen sie daher mit, und können uns dabei unmöglich den Wunsch versagen, daß doch Jeder, der die Vossischen Arbeiten dieser Art nach ihrem großen Werth und Nutzen zu schätzen weiß, und billig genug denkt, um lieber den edeln Verfasser bei einer so rühmlichen Unternehmung unterstützen, als nachher durch Ankauf eines gestohlenen und verunstalteten fremden Eigenthums das ehrlose Nachdruckergesindel bereichern zu helfen, eilen möge, sich durch Unterzeichnung das Verdienst eines Mitbeförderers zu erwerben. Wir werden uns ein Vergnügen daraus machen, die an uns gelangte Unterschriften zu besorgen; ersuchen aber diejenigen Theilnehmer, die sich an uns zu wenden belieben wollen, das Subscriptionsquantum, welches in 1 Thlr. 4 Gr. besteht, den alten Louisd'or zu 5 Thlr. gerechnet, zur Vermeidung unnöthiger Weitläuftigkeit, mit der Bestellung zugleich, und zwar franco einzusenden. Das Werk erscheint zur Ostermesse 1789, und der Ladenpreis wird alsdann 1 Thlr. 12 Ggr. seyn.

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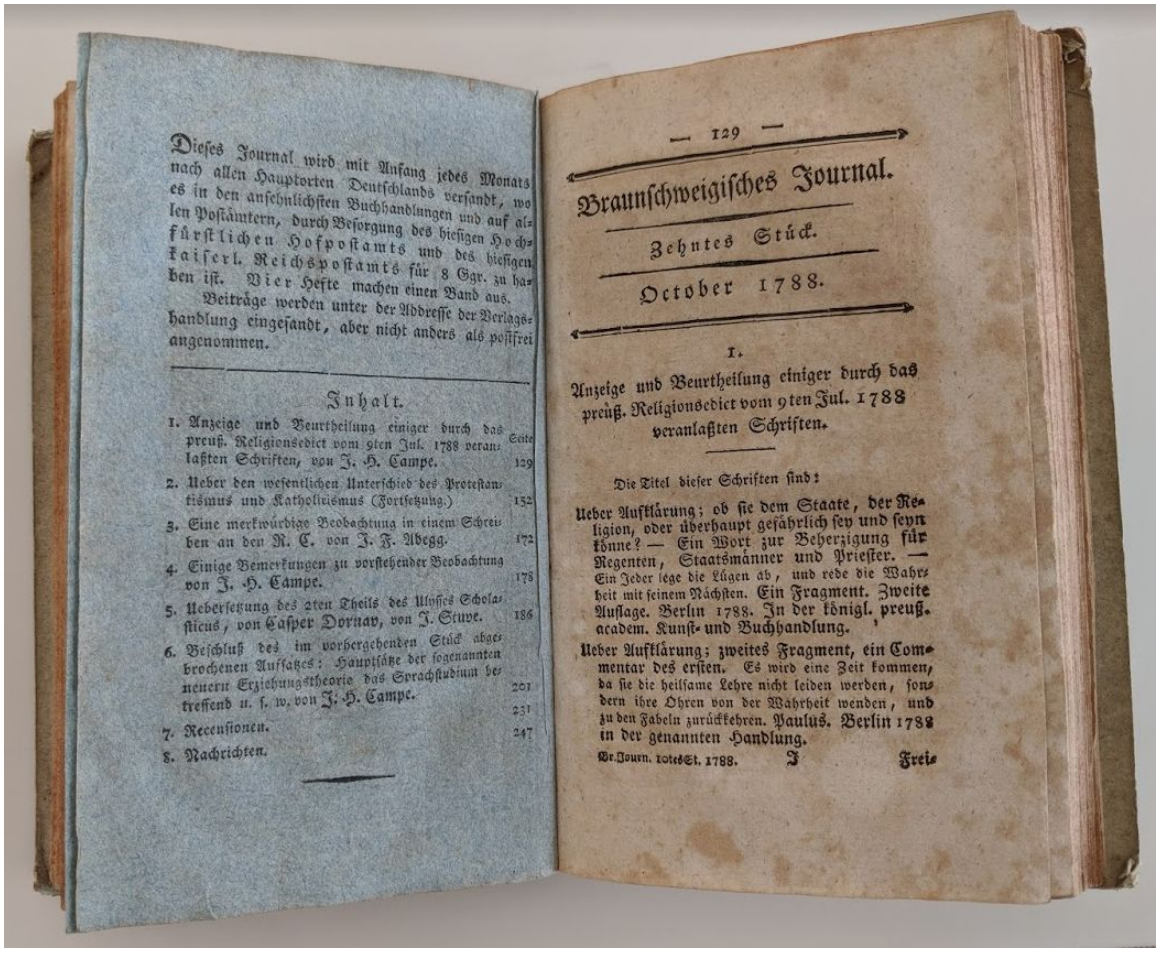

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Inhalt.

Braunschweigisches Journal.

Zehntes Stück.

October 1788.

1.

Anzeige und Beurtheilung einiger durch das preuß. Religionsedict vom 9ten Jul. 1788 veranlaßten Schriften.

Die Titel dieser Schriften sind:

Ueber Aufklärung; ob sie dem Staate, der Religion, oder überhaupt gefährlich sey und seyn könne? — Ein Wort zur Beherzigung für Regenten, Staatsmänner und Priester. — Ein Jeder lege die Lügen ab, und rede die Wahrheit mit seinem Nächsten. Ein Fragment. Zweite Auflage. Berlin 1788. In der königl. preuß. academ. Kunst- und Buchhandlung.

Ueber Aufklärung; zweites Fragment, ein Commentar des ersten. Es wird eine Zeit kommen, da sie die heilsame Lehre nicht leiden werden, sondern ihre Ohren von der Wahrheit wenden, und zu den Fabeln zurückkehren. Paulus. Berlin 1788 in der genannten Handlung.

Figure 8: Inside of the front cover of the *Braunschweigisches Journal*, October 1788, providing both subscription instructions and prices, along with a table of contents for that issue.

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